AN INITIATING THEORY AND PRAXIS PARADIGM FOR MINISTRY

AMONG OLDER ADULTS IN AN ANGLICAN PARISH:

A FOUR YEAR STUDY

A Professional Project

presented to

the Faculty of the

Claremont School of Theology

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

M. Michelle Woodhouse

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This professional project, completed by

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*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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ABSTRACT

AN INITIATING THEORY AND A PRAXIS PARADIGM FOR MINISTRY

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This project is a four year narrative case study based on an
initiating theory and praxis paradigm for ministry among older adults in
an Episcopal parish. The problem this project addresses is the absence of
reported field studies demonstrating an integration between
interdisciplinary theory and active ministry with older adults. At the
same time, older adults are a greater percentage of the current
population of the United States than at any other time in history; many
are pioneers in a new stage of life with new issues facing them.
Concurrently, American society celebrates youth and tends to
marginalize older adults. The religious community is the one setting,
other than the family, where older adults may participate in an
intergenerational experience.

The method used was a form of qualitative research, characterized
by narrative case study, which allowed the researcher to be an integral
part of the research process. The flexibility of this method was able to
accommodate the paradigm shifts in both theory and practice which
became necessary during the study. Because this method is based on the
premise that theory is integral to action and arises out of it, the method
was congruent with the initiating theory of the project and subsequent
praxis. The initiating theory was an integration of principles of Erik H.
Erikson's work, the clinical method of Carl Rogers, and elements of

liberation theologies. Subsequently, as a result of praxis, the Benedictine Way was adapted for the ministry among older adults. The rhythm of praxis during the course of this study not only provided a research tool, but it also allowed for analyzing the data for developing themes during the course of the four years. A small research team of participants worked with the primary researcher to analyze and interpret the data at the conclusion of the study.

The first major finding was how the data coalesced around particular themes of *being, belonging, and becoming*. The theme *of being* signified the new identity older adults experienced; *belonging* was experienced through an intentional community; *becoming* emerged as the people found new purpose with an orientation to the future. The second major finding was that the older adults discovered and appropriated freedom. The third finding was the value of adapting the Benedictine Way to ministry among older adults.

The first conclusion for ministry is the importance of an initiating theory and an ongoing praxis for ministry among older adults. The second conclusion is a model of ministry that, in the main, may be transferable to other Episcopal parishes and communities of faith.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This project originated when the researcher, an Episcopal priest, was called to a parish as Associate for Senior Ministries with the mission of developing a program to meet the needs of older adults. This mission was addressed through this project, beginning with the question: How might an initiating theory and praxis paradigm for ministry among older adults in an Episcopal parish be conceptualized, formulated, and implemented?

Importance of the Problem

Three major issues persist in forming a theory and praxis paradigm for ministry with older adults. These issues point to the complexity and sophistication of the problem.

The theoretical issues are as follows:

1. There is an absence or inadequacy of reported field studies demonstrating an integration between interdisciplinary theory and ministerial action among older adults in parish settings. This fact presents both a difficulty and a fresh opportunity for the church to examine the nature of ministry to older adults.

2. The psychological hypotheses and clinical experience of Erik Erikson and Carl Rogers have served for many years as a foundation for understanding the nature and needs of older adults. Their work has lent itself to integration with a succession of theological constructs,

including the realism of the depression years, evidenced in the writing of the Niebuhrs. The trauma of the Second World War and its impact on theological discourse was expressed through such persons as Paul Tillich. Simultaneously, the neo-orthodoxy of the 1940s and 50s resulted in an emphasis on many traditional Protestant doctrines. The emergence of liberation theologies in the 1970s and 80s, particularly as they were given voice through black, feminist, and theologians from developing regions of the world, are yet another in the long succession of attempts to bring some congruence between Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. Presently, process theology increasingly offers itself as a candidate for integration with the psychological disciplines.

The question is: Which psychological and theological perspectives, melded together, offer the most helpful theoretical basis for understanding the consequences of longer life expectancy, and also meeting the challenges for the quality of that longer life?

3. A third consideration is the implicit and explicit presuppositions that the older adult participants brought to the design and implementation of this project. The very nature of their longevity means they have participated in the changing landscape in both psychological and theological understandings of human nature, Christian faith, the church, and the practice of ministry over the span of their lifetimes. The implication is that they may hold no single common perception of these understandings. The question then arises: How might this disparity be addressed in a way that is consistent with Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience?

Alongside these theoretical issues are some practical issues as well:

1. People over sixty years of age are a greater percentage of the current population of the United States than at any other time in this nation's history. Consequently, older adults are pioneers in a new stage of life whose waters are largely uncharted. For instance, because they are living longer, they have increased experiences of loss and grief, including the loss of intimacy, children's predeceasing them, and physical limitations that often lead to a change in living arrangement.

2. American society celebrates youth and tends to ignore and even denigrate older adults. Older adults are often sequestered in retirement communities and nursing homes, deprived of the richness and cross-fertilization of intergenerational relationships. These factors may precipitate an erosion of positive self-identity and foster feelings of worthlessness, loneliness, and despair.

3. The religious community is the one setting, other than the family, where older adults may participate in an intergenerational experience. Fundamentally, the church community is committed, by the Gospel it proclaims, to love neighbor as self, to offer hospitality, acceptance, and affirmation to all people regardless of age. Therefore, this project may play a role in assisting the parish church to claim, reclaim, and celebrate ministry with and among older adults. Older adults represent a great resource for ministry as repositories of wisdom learned through life experience and as exemplars of faith in the face of inevitable adversity. As they are given the means to continue to grow and to develop their spiritual lives in community, they offer models of living

the Christian life to their peers and those who are younger in age.

Practically, many older adults are a reservoir of untapped talent and time when, concurrently, the church needs volunteers to carry on its mission as more and more younger people join the secular work force. The professional leadership of the church has an opportunity to develop and to utilize this resource within the local congregation.

Thesis

The utilization of the psychological perspectives of Erik Erikson's developmental tasks for the last stage of life and Carl Rogers' theory of personality and interpersonal relations, integrated with elements of the liberation theologies and Benedictine spirituality, serve as an initiating theory and praxis paradigm for ministry among older adults in an Episcopal parish.

Definitions of Major Terms

There are a number of terms used in this project with specific meanings in mind. The more substantive ones are defined as follows for purposes of clarity.

Paradigm: A paradigm is a model or archetype. The particular paradigm developed in this project is within the interpretive/phenomenological genre and is dialogic, consistent with the methodology. This means the development of the paradigm was dependent on the interactive relationships between the researching priest, the research team, and the older adults in the parish.

<u>Praxis</u>: Praxis is a way of reflecting that draws theory and/or concepts from practice or action; therefore, it is not normative of itself.[1] "Praxis is not simply subjective and arbitrary, it means that a situation has been analyzed and assumed by means of an interpretative synthesis."[2] The employment of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience ensure the Christian character of praxis.

<u>Liberation Theologies</u>: A liberation theology, by its very nature, emerges out of a particular social reality.[3] Therefore, there is not one but many variations on the theological theme of liberation. Liberation is a change agent; it implies movement. In the instance of liberation theologies, it is a movement that is characterized by both an inward journey into the self and an outward journey through this life toward union with God. Liberation theologies embrace all dimensions of human existence and experience, individual and communal.[4] Elements integral to the liberation theologies that will be employed in this project are consciousness raising, the identification with the poor, freedom, and the paradigms of the Exodus, the Cross, and the Resurrection.[5]

<u>Older Adult</u>: The United States Census Bureau "currently refers to those from fifty-five to sixty-four as 'older,' those sixty-five to

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[1] Gustavo A. Gutierrez, <u>The Truth Shall Make You Free</u> (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1990), 101.

[2] Jose Miquez Bonino, <u>Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation</u> (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 72.

[3] Gutierrez, <u>Truth Shall Make You Free</u>, 58.

[4] Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, <u>Introducing Liberation Theology</u>, trans. Paul Burns (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987), 20.

[5] Boff and Boff, 20-30.

seventy-four as 'elderly,' those seventy-five to eighty-four as 'aged,' and those over eighty-five as 'very old.'"[6] Using these categories, the term older adult actually encompasses at least two and potentially three generations The demarcation of sixty-five is often used to separate adult from older adult as this is a widely used age for retirement and full retirement benefits.

Spirituality: Spirituality has been variously defined, depending on the discipline or faith stance the person who utilizes it. Gustavo Gutierrez, the Latin American Roman Catholic theologian, defines spirituality as a way of living as a Christian; he says, "our methodology is our spirituality, our way of being Christians."[7] Retired professor of pastoral counseling, Howard Clinebell, writes: "Spirituality is coming alive at one's center." He identifies six dimensions to spirituality which he defines as: enlivening one's mind, revitalizing one's body, renewing and enriching one's intimate relationships, and deepening one's relationship with nature, growth in relation to the significant institutions in one's life, and deepening and vitalizing one's relationship with God.[8]

Benedictine Spirituality: Benedictine spirituality, the form of spirituality practiced by Benedict of Nursia and his followers, is no less

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[6] Thomas B. Robb, "A Quick Look at Later Life in Relation to the Church," in Older Adult Ministry, eds. James A. McDaniel et al. (Atlanta: Presbyterian Publishing House, 1987), 29.

[7] Gutierrez, Truth Shall Make You Free, 5.

[8] Howard J. Clinebell, "The Six Dimensions of Wholeness Centered in Spirit," in Spirit-Centered Wholeness, eds. H. Newton Malony et al (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), 22.

than a way of living the Gospel in community. It is the totality of life

balanced between praying, working, and growing together in the Lord.

Brian Taylor has written,

> Benedict's <u>Rule</u> is incarnational--it works with people as they
> are in this world, calling them to what they can become in
> Christ . . . the Benedictine way is a force from within that
> acts as leaven in the loaf. To become fully human in this life
> as it has been given to us is to allow the sacredness of the
> ordinary to become manifest.[9]

This describes a sacrament of the ordinary, which is no less than the art

of building sacred bridges on the journey with Jesus Christ through life's

relationships and experiences. Benedict described his method for

practicing the Rule in his Prologue: "we intend to establish a school for

the Lord's service."[10] Benedictine spirituality, then, is a way of

intentionally attempting to live the Gospel in community.

Work Previously Done in the Field

A growing body of literature is available on older adults, having

proliferated approximately twenty years ago. The increase in printed

material in the last ten years represents a significant shift in emphasis.

The work done two decades ago has a distinct descriptive character.

There are descriptions of demographics, profiles of older persons, and

some focus on specific economic, health, and housing issues. For

instance, the 1971 White House Conference on Aging identified nine

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[9] Brian C. Taylor, <u>Spirituality for Everyday Living</u> (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1989), 12.

[10] [Benedict], <u>The Rule of St. Benedict in English</u>, ed. Timothy Fry (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1982), 18.

major areas of concern: income, employment and retirement, physical and mental health, housing, nutrition, transportation, retirement roles and activities, education, spiritual well-being.[11] There are a few advocacy voices from this period, such as United States Senator Claude Pepper, Maggie Kuhn of the Gray Panthers, and the American Association of Retired Persons.[12] The descriptive literature includes older adults as subject matter in specific professional journals, especially in the areas of health, education, welfare, and psychology.

In the last decade, the shift became evident with an increase in scientific publications on gerontology and the aging process. Rather than simply describing what is observed, there has been an attempt to systematically research, study, and develop theory that explains the process of aging and identify the needs associated with it. This shift has been accompanied by a number of programmatic handbooks, both in the public arena and through denominational church headquarters. These handbooks include charts, graphs, assessment tools, lists of programs that might be included in a comprehensive program, and appendices of resource groups. The principal ones are listed in the bibliography.

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[11] Cedric W. Tilberg, introduction to The Fullness of Life, ed. Cedric W. Tilberg ([New York]: Division for Mission in North America, Lutheran Church in America, 1980), 21.

[12] Mary S. Winters, "Congregational and Individual Advocacy on Aging," in Older Adult Ministry, eds. James A. McDaniel et al. (Atlanta: Presbyterian Publishing House, 1987), 197-213.

Four handbooks stand out for special mention because they not only offer programs, but they also include some rationale for program. Affirmative Aging is a collection of essays with a study guide sponsored by the Episcopal Society for Ministry on Aging. Its particular emphasis is on spirituality and aging, and it attempts to blend theory and practice.[13] Older Adult Ministry is a resource book compiled through interdenominational collaboration and has in-depth essays on various aspects of aging and programs for older adults.[14] Richard Gentzler of the United Methodist Church has produced a workbook on designing older adult programs that has some helpful assessment tools.[15]

The most comprehensive work is more a library than a single volume, Aging, Spirituality, and Religion. The subject matter ranges from theory to practice in a number of disciplines concerned with aging. It is not only interdenominational, but it is also interfaith in scope. The result is a handbook of immense value to anyone interested in reading the latest thinking, research, and practical experience of a number of acknowledged experts in the field of aging. This volume brings together vital information and offers helpful perspectives for those interested in a comprehensive, integrated presentation on aging.[16]

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[13] Lorraine D. Chiaventone et al., eds., Affirmative Aging (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1987), 197-213.

[14] James A. McDaniel et al., eds., Older Adult Ministry (Atlanta: Presbyterian Publishing House, 1987).

[15] Richard H. Gentzler, Designing a Ministry, by, with, and for Older Adults (Nashville: Office of Lay Ministries, United Methodist Church, 1993).

[16] Melvin A. Kimble et al., eds., Aging, Spirituality, and Religion (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

The problem now, in the literature surveyed, is the lack of information in two significant areas:

1. There are no published longitudinal case studies conducted in religious communities in which integrated theoretical formulations and praxis are documented, analyzed, and reformulated over a period of time.

2. The programmatic components that are published and have been developed in other denominations identify areas that might be addressed and give some specific program guidelines; however, they do not report any theoretical bases, or how they were formulated, by whom, and why they are recommended for use by congregations.

Method

The purpose of this project is to respond to these lacunae by:

1. Offering a narrative case study conducted over a four year period in an Episcopal parish setting.

2. Analyzing and interpreting the narrative case study, using a small research team of older adult participants chaired by this researcher.

3. Demonstrating how an integrated theory can serve to inform and to enhance the research design and praxis.

4. Demonstrating the effectiveness of developing theory and praxis from a stance with older adults rather than imposing it on them.

5. Offering some conclusions on the viability of this paradigm to add to the body of knowledge on programs for older adults in individual communities of faith.

Given this five-point purpose, the research method needs to be compatible with the initiating theory and sufficiently flexible to incorporate emerging data from the praxis that might necessitate paradigm shifts. The methodology chosen is a form of qualitative research known as Pro-Active Research Method, as described by William R. Myers in his book, Research in Ministry.[17]

This form of qualitative research, characterized by narrative case study, allows the researcher to be an integral part of the research process. Researcher and constituents interact freely in this method. It can also be adapted as paradigms shift in theory and practice during a four year study. Myers emphasizes also that theory is intrinsic to the process of research and arises out of it.[18] This central characteristic makes this method congruent with an initiating integrated theory between some of the principles of Erik Erikson's work, the clinical method of Carl Rogers, and elements of liberation theologies (described in Chapter 2) and how that theory might be modified and reformulated through praxis during the course of the study.

Chapter 3 describes the specific methods and research tools used in the narrative case study as well as the presentation of the study.

Chapter 4 will offer analysis, interpretation and conclusions reached as a result of the case study experience.

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[17] William R. Myers, Research in Ministry (Chicago: Exploration Press, 1993), 29-30.

[18] Myers, 30.

Scope and Limitations of the Project

The central question of this project is: How might a parish church with a significant number of older adults create a theoretical matrix and develop a multi-faceted program among them conducive to spiritual growth and the building of Christian community? The focus, therefore, will be on the initiating theory, the emergence of new theoretical considerations as a result of praxis, and the ministry that evolved as a result.

Contextual questions have important influence on ministry with older adults, but they are outside the scope of this project. The project will not include:

1. a full discussion of national, state, local or religious demographics other than those that will help describe the context and nature of the focal parish and the participants in the project; or

2. a broad discussion of political, economic, or social issues affecting older adults beyond the particular focus of those encountered in the lives of the participants in this project unless raised by them as issues of concern.

Procedure for Integration

The integration of notions from liberation theologies, as represented in the writing of Gustavo Gutierrez and Jose Miquez Bonino, with the clinical psychology findings of Erik Erikson and Carl Rogers, are formulated with several factors in mind.

1. Their methods have a common characteristic. Each figure, in his own discipline, works from the ground up, giving first consideration

to the phenomena he is observing. The findings and interpretations are drawn from observations; only after extensive observation do these theorists formulate their theological or theoretical postulates.

2. Each of these theorists is concerned with the freedom of people to live in the present, unfettered by the past. Freedom is a necessity for change.

3. Each describes the importance of relationship and community.

4. The liberation theological notion that consciousness raising is preliminary to effecting positive change is congruent with both Erikson's concept of ego-integrity and Rogers' understanding of the fully-functioning person.

5. Gutierrez in his seminal book, The Truth Shall Make You Free, does not limit his understanding of the poor to those who are politically and economically deprived. He says that "to be poor is also a way of feeling, knowing, reasoning, making friends, loving, believing suffering, celebrating, praying."[19] This same defining notion could be applied to those who are diminished in American culture due to age and infirmity. Older adults often are denigrated and marginalized in a society that places a higher priority on youth and defines self-worth in terms of earning power. Older adults are either retired or approaching it. It is no wonder, then, that many older adults suffer from an eroded self-identity and are forced into the crisis that, Erikson says, precipitates a final life stage of "Integrity versus Despair" which will be discussed in Chapter 2

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[19] Gutierrez, Truth Shall Make You Free, 10.

of this project. In Rogers' terms, persons in the major transitions and periods in life may find that they are governed more by what others determine they are than by their own inner sense of self.[20]

This integration provides a starting point, an initiating theory, for the project's inception. Additionally, this integration provides some parameters for programmatic design and implementation. For instance, James Birren and Donna Deutchman, in their book, Guiding Autobiography Groups for Older Adults, have described a method that provides a means to actualize the work that Erikson states is necessary to resolve the issue of "Integrity versus Despair" in the end years of life. The method is a structuring of the life review process that facilitates integration and leads to resolution.[21] This will be described more fully in the narrative case study of the first year of the project in Chapter 3.

Summary

Given this introductory overview, the initiating theory for this project is discussed in the following chapter to offer the perspective which was applied at the commencement of the case study by this researcher.

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[20] Carl R. Rogers, "What It Means to Become a Person," in The Self, ed. Clark E. Mousakas (New York: Harper and Bros, 1956), 197.

[21] James Birren and Donna Deutchman, Guiding Autobiography Groups for Older Adults (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 3-23.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Introductory Rationale and Process

The need for a theoretical foundation emerged out of a concern for bringing a substantive intentionality and a distinct perspective to this project. Additionally, a theoretical foundation would give a set of guiding principles to help manage the complexity of the contemplated ministry among older adults by giving direction and meaning to its various components.

The question arose, What is an appropriate initial framework for this ministry that draws on an integration of relevant scientific disciplines and theological inquiry? The corollary was, How might this integrated framework implicitly allow for new and emergent data that might require theoretical shifts in the paradigm?

The works of Erik H. Erikson and Carl R. Rogers, both seminal clinical psychologists and writers in the behavioral sciences, were chosen for several reasons. First, both had significant experience with a wide range of individuals and groups in a therapeutic setting. Second, they based their hypotheses on their observations, allowing theory to emerge out of practice, "from below." Third, they viewed life and growth as a process and not as a series of fixed entities, like hurdles to be jumped. They saw life experience as fluid and dynamic which might be channeled and utilized for more fully living in the present. Fourth, they offered complementary themes, points and counterpoints, that give a basis for comparing them and integrating a portion of their work. Fifth, both are respectful of older adults and concerned for their well-being which is

an important consideration given the general tenor of American society toward those in their later years.

Elements of liberation theologies were chosen for integration with the psychological perspectives of Erikson and Rogers because they also have, as a basic premise, the importance of emergent data, in this instance, theology that arises from the people. Many of the foundational themes of the liberation theologies are themes that run through both Erikson's and Rogers' work. Together, all three threads weave a rich tapestry of meaning and purpose in approaching ministry among older adults.

Two Paradigm Shifts

During the course of this project, two significant points occurred in the process that called for fundamental shifts in the nature of the paradigm. The necessity for the first shift came at the end of the first year. Sufficient growth and change had transpired in many of the participants so that their level of functioning appeared to be post-Erikson in character. Specifically, the degree of "liberation" went beyond what had been postulated. Something new was emerging that was life-giving and life-sharing, a new energy and a new positive identity was making an appearance. Rather than attempting to put this "new wine in old wineskins," we simply noted it and in the spirit of the project, rejoiced in this new reality and framed it as an extension to a group of Rogers' clinical description of a fully-functioning person which is described more fully later in this chapter.

The second paradigm shift came later in the project, at the end of the third year, when, paradoxically, the project strained against the

confines of the liberation theologies that had formed the initiating theory. The hypothesis, in retrospect, is that we had come to the point in our own genesis as a social reality that we were faced with the necessity of giving birth to our own theology of liberation. Therefore, we searched within our tradition and experience and we found in the principles of Benedictine spirituality and community an exemplar that incorporated all that was arising out of our praxis, including the experience that precipitated the reflection in the first paradigm shift. This movement, more than any other single factor, characterizes the particular texture of this project and most importantly, represents its unique contribution.

An Evolving Theory

The initiating theory, then, was modified to include the principles of Benedictine spirituality and community. In other words, this modification is the embodiment of a new identity, a new being in community, that evolved in the course of the project, not only for the participants, but for the whole parish family as well. This new understanding is incorporated into the thesis statement for this project. The constituent elements are the balance and integration among the psychological perspectives of Erik Erikson's developmental tasks for the last stage of life, Carl Rogers theory of personality and interpersonal relations, notions taken from liberation theologies, and principles of Benedictine Spirituality and community.

We now turn our attention to the specific formulations within these constituent elements to further explicate the theoretical matrix of this project.

Erik H. Erikson

Introduction

Erikson's construct of a life cycle set forth the succession of stages or transitions (crises) through which human beings progressed from birth to death. Each stage built on the success or failure of negotiating the preceding stage, and since they are all related, all depend on this particular sequence. Each stage is accompanied by a virtue that is acquired most fully in conjunction with that stage.[1] This linear progression was modified later in Erikson's thinking to a more spiral configuration where the life cycle turned back on itself, not to recapitulate the earlier stages, rather to expand upon the tasks in each one and to fulfill it more completely. In this process, he postulated the opportunity to obtain a more mature level of the associated virtue. For instance, Erikson writes in reference to the stages:

> No doubt, the role of old age needs to be reobserved, rethought. To this we can here try to contribute only by reviewing our scheme. . . . What is the place of old age in the length and the width of it?[2]

He answers his question by employing the spiral. The virtue of hope is associated with the first developmental stage of life, but as the spiral turns back on itself later in life to expand on this first stage, Erikson theorizes that

> hope connoted the most basic quality of 'I-ness,' without which life could not begin or meaningfully end. . . . we need a

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[1] Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963), 270.

[2] Erik H. Erikson, The Life Cycle Completed (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1982), 62.

word for the last possible form of hope. . . . for this, certainly, the word faith suggests itself. If then, as the end of the life cycle turns back on the beginnings, there has remained something in the anatomy even of mature hope, and in a variety of faiths. . . . [3]

Therefore, as this quote suggests, a purposive recapitulation of one's life may not only help to resolve some earlier issue, it may also serve to increase and enrich the apprehension and use of the accompanying virtue; in other words, a spiraling back, not for conflict resolution but for life enhancement. This later work of Erikson's shows the progression of his clinical work and is much more open-ended. His focus on old age is further authenticated by his own participation in and experience of it.

Themes

Ego-Integrity. The final stage of the Life Cycle is (Ego)-integrity versus Despair. Erikson defines ego-integrity in several ways. A prominent definition is coherence and wholeness:[4]

> Only in him who in some way has taken care of things and people and has adapted himself to the triumphs and disappointments adherent to being, the originator of others or the generator of products and ideas-only in him may gradually ripen the fruits of these seven stages. . . . It is the ego's accrued assurance of its proclivity for order and meaning. It is post-narcissistic love of the human ego-not of the self-as an experience which conveys some world order and spiritual sense. . . . It is the acceptance of one's one and only life cycle as something that had to be and that, by necessity, permitted of no substitutions.[5]

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[3] Erik H. Erikson, Life Cycle Completed, 62.

[4] Erikson, Life Cycle Completed, 64.

[5] Erikson, Childhood and Society, 268.

On the other hand, the opposite of ego-integrity is despair. Erikson

describes the emergence of despair:

> The lack or loss of this accrued ego integration is signified by fear of death: the one and only life cycle is not accepted as the ultimate of life. Despair expresses the feeling that the time is now short, too short for the attempt to start another life and to try out alternate roads to integrity.[6]

Further, though the life cycle is a universal phenomenon, it is

experienced within the particularity of a given social and time-bound

context.

Capacity for Growth/change. This theme is implicit in all of

Erikson's writing. He understands that all persons have an innate

capacity to grow and change. Further, there is a relational dimension to

this capacity. Robert Cole, writing about Erikson's work says: "In thus

reinforcing the values by which the ego exists [security, identity, integrity]

societies create the only conditions under which human growth is

possible." [7] However, Erikson also warns of too much change in too

many ways at one time can erode one's sense of ego-identity.[8] This is an

important consideration in designing any program for the purpose of

facilitating the developmental tasks described in the life cycle.

Given this caution, Erikson affirms the potential for growth: "a healthy

personality weathers inner and outer conflicts, emerging and reemerging

with an increased sense of inner unity, good judgment,

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[6] Erikson, Childhood and Society, 268-69.

[7] Robert Coles, Erik H. Erikson (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970), 139.

[8] Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), 42.

a capacity to do well, according to the standards of those who are significant to him."[9]

Capacity for Self-direction. Erikson found the capacity for self-direction to be particularly true and a necessary capacity in old age because, generally speaking, older adults are the oldest living generation. They have no one older who can give guidance out of their experience. As Erikson said: "Members of the omega generation must be guided by ideological heroes and by their own wisdom and memories, as they themselves serve as guides for the generations that follow."[10]

Concept of Self/Identity. What holds true for the capacity for self-direction also holds true for a concept of self-identity. There is no older generation to turn to who models identity in old age other than older adult peers. Where do older adults turn for confirmation of their identity? Erikson makes an important distinction regarding identity in old age. He writes: "The sense of identity in old age rests not only on recollection and evaluation of the personal past but also on members of younger generations and on their representation of the generational future."[11] Therefore, a sense of self is grounded not only in one's own life but also in the lives of generations to come.

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[9] Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, 52.

[10] Erik H. Erikson et al., Vital Involvement in Old Age (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986), 130.

[11] Erikson et al., Vital Involvement in Old Age, 130.

Robert Cole is helpful in giving us a synthesis of Erikson's

thought on identity as rooted in confidence. He writes:

> It is an accrued confidence . . . confidence that somehow in
> the midst of change, one *is* [original italics]; that is, one has
> an inner sameness and continuity which others can
> recognize and which is so certain that it can
> unselfconsciously be taken for granted."[12]

Conceptualization of Freedom and the Necessity for It . Freedom

and identity go hand in hand in old age. Particularly a form of freedom

that is grounded in being rather than doing and which is claimed as one

has confidence in one's own identity. Erikson writes that "the first step

of liberation is the liberty not to be what others say one must be, so that

one may be free to find a self-chosen form of being what one is . . . ."[13]

In another place he says, "But they who cannot choose to be different,

cannot decide freely to remain what they are."[14] For Erikson, the

interpersonal dimension of liberation has an egalitarian quality,

enhanced by mutual need.[15] This has important ramifications for

individual and corporate ministry among older adults in a community of

faith as demonstrated in Chapter 3.

Creativity. Erikson understands creativity as a byproduct of one of

his central concepts, generativity. He writes, "Generativity as the

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[12] Coles, 165.

[13] Erik H. Erikson, Dimensions of a New Identity (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974),
116.

[14] Erikson, Dimensions of a New Identity, 114.

[15] Erikson, Dimensions of a New Identity, 117.

instinctual power behind various forms of selfless 'caring', potentially extends to whatever a man generates and leaves behind, creates and produces (or helps to produce)."[16]

Summary. Erikson understands persons as relational, capable of growth, change, and self-direction in a social climate of freedom. In terms of identity, he postulates a dynamic in which persons are always developing through the various stages of the life cycle and then spiraling back. The implication is that those in the last stage of the life cycle are just as significant as those in the earlier stages. Further, because persons are living longer, new data may be needed on the older years, possibly giving rise to new hypotheses on the capacity of persons to move ever more deeply into unitive integrity informed by wisdom.

These are the elements of Erikson's work that particularly lend themselves as a place to begin ministry among older adults in a parish setting. Erikson gives us the task, and in concert with him, we turn to Carl Rogers to suggest an approach, to deepen our consciousness of the sacred ground of interpersonal relations, and to give us some indicators of a fully functioning person. Together, they offer us some analogies to use to measure the progress of the project toward its goals.

Carl R. Rogers

Carl Rogers, like Erik Erikson, works from clinical experience to formulate his theory. His method is rooted in the reality of the particular encounter in the present moment between therapist and client and is a process that seeks to move the client into the future.

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[16] Erik H. Erikson, Insight and Responsibility (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964), 131.

He has two constructs that are foundational to his theory:

organism and self. Briefly, the organism is the human entity with all of

its physical and psychological functions: a living, growing, unified system

which is the center of all internal experience. It has a basic tendency to

actualize along the lines of its heredity, and to maintain and to enhance

itself in a socially constructive manner. It contains within it a

phenomenal field, the totality of all conscious and unconscious

experience, and is the frame of reference known only to the individual.

Gradually, through experience, a portion of this phenomenal field

becomes differentiated into a self which may or may not have awareness.

This self has a tendency toward actualization too. Additionally, a

person has an ideal self whom he or she would like to become.

Congruence between self and the total experience of the organism (real

self), between self and external reality, and between self and ideal self

result in adjustment, growth, maturity, and the process of actualizing.

Incongruence in any one of these relationships results in maladjustment,

anxiety, insecurity and dis-ease.[17] In theological terms, these are all

forms of sin.

Rogers' basic point concerning the organism is that it is the

fundamental physical and psychological reality and "any deviation from

this reality threatens the integrity of the person."[18]

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[17] Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey, Theories of Personality, 3rd ed. (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1978), 279- 92.

[18] Hall and Lindzey, 293.

Rogers has not found that persons are distorted in their basic

nature; however, he has found that there are some intrinsic

characteristics, albeit not perfect but perfectible, which are inherent to

the person and not the result of external influences.[19]

> Rogers identifies these deepest characteristics as tending
> toward development, differentiation, cooperative
> relationships; whose life tends fundamentally to move
> from dependence to independence; whose impulses tend
> naturally to harmonize into a complex and changing
> pattern of self regulation; whose total character is such as
> to tend to preserve and enhance himself and his species, and
> perhaps to move it toward further evolution . . . that fully to
> be a human being is to enter into the complex process of
> being one of the most widely sensitive, responsive, creative,
> and adaptive creatures on this planet.[20]

Rogers' clinical findings regarding these intrinsic characteristics of

human nature have ramifications for understanding the dynamics of

older adults. They, as well as their younger counterparts, have the innate

ability to grow, to change, to adapt, and to express themselves creatively.

Age is no barrier, unless the barrier is self-imposed.

Themes

One of Rogers' key concepts is the necessity of freedom for an

individual to move toward really social goals.[21] He sets his explication

of the concept of freedom within the experience of learning to be free to be

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[19] Carl Rogers, "The Nature of Man," Pastoral Psychology 11 (May 1960) : 23.

[20] Rogers, " Nature of Man," 24.

[21] Carl Rogers, "Paul Tillich and Carl Rogers: A Dialogue," Pastoral Psychology 19 (Feb. 1968) : 58.

one's self, of choosing one's self as opposed to being determined by
others' expectations and demands. He writes,

> This learning is composed of movement from as well as
> movement toward. From being persons driven by inner
> forces they do not understand, fearful and distrustful of
> these deeper feelings and of themselves, living by values
> they have taken over from others. . . they move toward
> being persons who accept and enjoy their own feelings,
> who value and trust the deeper levels of their nature, who
> find strength in being their own uniqueness, who live by
> values they experience. This learning, this movement,
> enables them to live as more individuated, more creative,
> more responsive, and more responsible persons.[22]

More specifically for the purposes of this project, Rogers defines freedom

as

> essentially an inner thing . . . a subjective, creative,
> existential freedom . . . a discovery of meaning within oneself
> . . . it is the burden of being responsible for the self one
> chooses to be. It is the recognition by the person that he is
> in an emerging process, not a static end product. [23]

Fundamentally then, Rogers is speaking of an anti-deterministic

phenomenological dimension of persons in being and becoming. He sees

freedom as a profoundly important consequence of his view, saying:

> freedom, rightly understood, is a fulfillment, by the person, of
> the ordered sequence of his life. As Martin Buber puts it: "The
> free man . . . believes in destiny, and believes that it stands
> in need of him." [24]

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[22] Carl Rogers, "Learning to be Free," (Part One), Pastoral Psychology 13 (Nov. 1962) : 49.

[23] Rogers, "Learning to be Free," 51.

[24] Rogers, "Learning to be Free," 51.

This perspective is not simply an individualistic fulfillment of one's potentialities, rather it is inextricably bound up with social processes. This is true because of the following reasons. First, this learning to be free and exercising it takes form in a relationship between persons. It has, according to Rogers, three constituent qualities which are brought to bear by the therapist: genuineness/congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding. Second, the individual "chooses to fulfill himself by playing a responsible and voluntary part in bringing about the destined events of his world . . . of becoming a responsible agent in this real world." [25] Rogers emphasizes the core importance of this concept by saying: "Responsible personal choice is the most essential element of being a person." [26] Responsible personal choice grows out of the experience of freedom on the one hand, and the experience of awareness on the other.

Rogers believes that awareness is the transformational agent between the distortions a person experiences and his actual experiencing. He says,

> The person comes to *be* what he *is* . . . . What this seems to mean is that the individual comes to *be*--in awareness--what he *is*--in experience. In other words, a person discovers himself in his experience and not apart from it or by an imposition on it. He is a complete and fully functioning human organism [original italics].[27]

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[25] Rogers, "Learning to be Free," 51.

[26] Carl Rogers, "Reinhold Niebuhr's 'The Self and the Dramas of History' - A Criticism," Pastoral Psychology 9 (June 1958) : 26.

[27] Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961), 104-05.

Further, Rogers sees free and undistorted awareness as a gift and an unique human capacity which is integral for growth, change, and self-actualization in a relational context. This extends into perceiving reality as it is and not in preconceived categories.[28] Perhaps most germane for older adults who are subject to age prejudice in our society is Rogers' clinical observation,

> In therapy the client discovers how much of his life is guided by what he thinks he should be, not by what he is. Often he discovers that he exists only in response to the demands of others, that he seems to have no self of his own, that he is only trying to think and feel and behave in the way that others believe he ought to think and feel and behave.[29]

Many older adults are subject to a subtle, and at times not so subtle, pressure to conform to the societal stereotypes of older adults. This tendency to conform to prevailing stereotypes is further exacerbated by many older adults experiencing a sense of insecurity and a growing dependence on others that causes them to conform to what they believe is expected of them. In short, they fall prey to society's expectations.

The notion of acceptance is central to Rogers' thought and experience. It is according to him, crucial for healing to be accomplished: "I believe that the person can only accept the unacceptable in himself when he is in a close relationship in which he experiences acceptance." [30] Rogers defines acceptance as "a warm regard for him as a

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[28] Rogers, On Becoming a Person, 104-05.

[29] Rogers, "What It Means to Become a Person," 195-211.

[30] Rogers, "Paul Tillich and Carl Rogers: A Dialogue," 59.

person of unconditional self-worth -- of value no matter what his condition, his behavior, his feelings."[31] Additionally, he adds the elements of respect and liking, as well as the actualizing of acceptance through communicating understanding. His definition of acceptance is akin to agape in Christian terminology, an unconditional love for the other.

Rogers speaks of himself as a humanist because he finds that religion and religious categories and language do not communicate to people in the present day. However, in his dialogue with Tillich, in which the latter spoke of the horizontal dimension between person and person, and the vertical dimension in which a person experiences something which is "infinite, unconditional and ultimate, beyond time and space,"[32] Rogers was able to resonate with Tillich's statement out of his own experience. This vertical dimension has a self-transcendental quality to it that is profoundly relational.

> I feel at times when I'm really being helpful to a client of mine, in those sort of rare moments when there is something approximating an I-Thou relationship between us, and when I feel something significant is happening, then I feel as though I am somehow in tune with the forces of the universe or that forces are operating through me in regard to this helping relationship.[33]

In theological terminology, Rogers is describing what could be called an awareness of grace, of the Holy, of Gracious Mystery. Experientially,

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[31] Rogers, On Becoming a Person, 34.

[32] Rogers, "Paul Tillich and Carl Rogers: A Dialogue," 60.

[33] Rogers, "Learning to be Free," 60-61.

Rogers is describing the human capacity to be a grace-receiving creature. Note that his referent is originating outside of himself as he speaks of "forces" and these are experienced within a relationship to his neighbor (client).

There are two other aspects in Rogers' construct that call for treatment here. They are his concept of the fully functioning person and his theory of creativity.

Rogers wrote on the fully functioning person over a period of years, though with few substantive changes even in light of his cumulative clinical experience. He makes a tentative claim to universality for this concept. The fully functioning person is the theoretical construct of an individual who has responded optimally to person-centered therapy. This person is: (1) increasingly open to and aware of experience, including openness to feelings of courage, tenderness, and awe; (2) increasingly living existentially, by which Rogers means the individual lives fully in the present moment, with self and personality emerging from and finding structure within experience; and (3) increasingly trusting of his own organism, which manifests itself in satisfying behavior to the enhancement of self and facilitates affiliation with others. The individual is being and becoming himself in relation to self and others within the context of experience.[34]

Rogers sums up the implications of this continuing process of becoming by describing specific indicators of progress towards fully

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[34] Carl Rogers, "The Concept of the Fully Functioning Person," Pastoral Psychology 16 (April 1965): 21-33.

functioning. The person experiences:

(1) freedom of choice, and a deep need for affiliation and communication with others as a highly relational being;

(2) creativity expressed in living constructively, adaptably, and in a trustworthy manner; and

(3) feeling more deeply and relating more intimately with confidence and courage.[35]

Rogers' theory of creativity is a process. He defines it as

> the emergence in action of a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people or circumstances of his life on the other. . . . Essentially it is socially constructive.[36]

The motivation for creativity is "man's tendency to actualize himself, to become his potentialities . . . the urge to expand, extend, develop, mature."[37]

Summary

Carl Rogers complements Erik Erikson by providing not only further content, but more importantly for the purposes of this project, by offering a means to approach ministry through unconditional positive regard, acceptance, congruence, and empathy, the hallmarks of Rogers' person-centered therapy. The application of these four guiding principles taken as normative for the interpersonal relationships among

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[35] Rogers, On Becoming a Person, 187-96.

[36] Rogers, On Becoming a Person, 350-52.

[37] Rogers, On Becoming a Person, 351.

participants in the project, allows older adults to explore more deeply their interior feelings and unresolved lifetime issues.

This concludes the psychological portion of the initiating theory. At this juncture, we turn our attention to the theological portion of the equation. A theological perspective and understanding that provides the rationale for this project as ministry as opposed to a social service program.

Elements of Liberation Theologies

The fundamental perspective that all manifestations of liberation theologies hold in common is that Jesus Christ comes as the Great Liberator of the oppressed. The underlying theological stance in this project is that older adults in United States' society and culture experience oppression by virtue of their age. This oppression surfaces as older adults are denigrated, marginalized, and stereotyped. They are seen in many instances as useless settlers, not as the courageous pioneers they are on the new frontier of longevity in life. As Gustavo Gutierrez, the Peruvian theologian, has written, "To be poor is also a way of feeling, knowing, reasoning, making friends, loving, believing, suffering, celebrating, praying."[38] Many, if not most, older adults in the United States, experience an insidious form of poverty that erodes every aspect of their lives and being and diminishes the lives and being of those in the younger generations who shun them.

From this basic understanding, and the fact that a liberation theology by its very nature emerges out of a particular social reality,

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[38] Gutierrez, Truth Shall Make You Free, 10.

we will consider several elements of liberation theologies which offer a means of ministerial praxis among older adults. The Boff brothers said: "Where is Liberation theology to be found? . . . . It is linked with a specific community and forms a vital part of it. Its service is one of theological enlightenment of the community on its pilgrim way."[39] A theology not imposed from above, rather one that arises from the matrix of living human experience. It is from this fundamental truth of the very nature of liberation theologies that it must be emphatically stated that each manifestation of liberation theology has its own context, character, and intrinsic motivating force. Liberation theologies are polychromatic, each with its own distinctive coloring and reflecting the context out of which it sprang. This genre of theology is marked by diversity and variety.

Several elements of special importance for the formulation of the integrated theory that guided this project are presented here. They were chosen because of their relevance to the contextual situation of most older adults and their self-understanding. These elements were chosen also because they lent themselves to the possibility of finding common ground with the theoretical components selected from the work of Erik Erikson and Carl Rogers. These elements from the liberation theologies are as follows.

1. Conscientization : The word conscientization was coined by the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire and by it, he means, "a 'critical awareness' -- which delves into problems, is open to new ideas, replaces

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[39] Boff and Boff, 19.

magical explanations with real causes, and tends to dialogue."[40] This consciousness raising was, and continues to be, a first and indispensable step in this project's ministry among older adults. It is a calling out in order to bring in, that is it is an exodus experience.

Conscientization as used in All Saints by-the-Sea Parish is multi-dimensional. One dimension is the awareness of each individual; a second dimension is that of the older adults as an entity; a third dimension is critical awareness in the parish as a whole; and the fourth dimension is the awareness stirred in participants who have come into the Parish's journey since the project began.

2. Concept of self: The liberation theologies explicitly affirm that individual, social, and cultural experience is a factor in the definition of self. In other words, conceptualizations of self need to be validated within the context of a particular situation to minimize the subtle biases which are always a danger when we are both the subject and the object of our inquiry.

3. Orientation toward the future : A conscious attempt to maintain a future oriented perspective has characterized this project over the four years. This future oriented perspective is rooted in specific liberation theologies' understandings of Creation, the Fall, and Covenant. As liberation theologian, Jose Miquez Bonino, has written: "How can we participate, act out, produce the quality of personal and corporate existence which has a future, which possesses eschatalogical reality,

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[40] Paulo Freire as quoted in Gustavo A. Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973), 57.

which concentrates the true history?"[41]

Creation is a dynamic, evolutionary process moving toward fulfillment, symbolized by the Kingdom of God. The concept of self is a part of that process, continually involved in change. The Kingdom of God, as a redeemed social order within the history of this world, is a recovery of God's original intention for Creation. The implication is that the self is understood as related to God, nature, and others, and is subject to historical, social, cultural, and political influences and processes. This relational capacity is a gift, and therefore, a characteristic of self is receptiveness.

The imago dei is a relational symbol extending into the future, a being and becoming in Christ in which one experiences union with God through others. "In Christ humankind gives God a human countenance and God gives humanity a divine countenance;"[42] therefore, it bespeaks a self-transcendent capacity of self as well as the equality of personhood. The self has a social destiny, comprised of self-conscious insight and responsible action for participating in the realization of God's intention for all Creation. Self realization/actualization, or impairment of it, is relational in nature.

In terms of the Fall, the inherent capacity to make choices affecting one's own and others' freedom implies a non-deterministic view of self

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[41] Míquez Bonino, 143.

[42] Gutierrez, Theology of Liberation, 206.

with the concomitant possibilities of disorder within the self and distortion of relationships. Sin is social in nature and is an abuse of freedom. Specifically sin is cast as a lack or absence of love, justice, holiness, and human solidarity. In essence, anything that militates against the equality of persons or rebels against the sovereignty of God is sin.[43] Therefore any disorder in self or society and any distortions of relationships qualifies under this rubric, including estrangement and alienation from unifying relationships within the self and between the self and the other.

Given an orientation toward the future, the notion of Covenant implicitly means that the self is viewed as co-creating in a continuing partnership, an ethic laden relationship within an eschatologically oriented process infused by grace. This relational gift lies at the heart of personal and community existence. Gutierrez writes the gift is one "of the self-communication of God, the grace of God's friendship . . . ."[44] The ramifications are that self is therefore grace-receiving and empowered. Therefore, the responsibility for the ongoing relationship with God has not only implications for an orientation toward the future, but also ethical implications with both individual and social dimensions.

Additionally, the self has a capacity for spirituality contingent on conversion, transformation of self, with a referent point outside of self: God and neighbor. The self is dependent on relations beyond itself, and

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[43] Geevarghese Mar Osthathios, Theology of a Classless Society (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979), 73.

[44] Gutierrez, Theology of Liberation, 208.

therefore the self has the capacity for response. This implicitly means that the self is dynamic, not static, and is oriented toward the future in the development of its relationship to God and neighbor. Gutierrez has written, "the Spirit will lead us to complete freedom, the freedom from everything that hinders us from fulfilling ourselves as human persons and as daughters and sons of God and the freedom to love and to enter into communion with God and with others."[45] This spirituality of liberation is contingent on a conversion to the Lord and to the neighbor. It is a "radical transformation of ourselves."[46]

4. The Concept of Liberation: Liberation is a freeing from one reality, in order to be free for another. Gutierrez has written,

> To be free means to be a disciple, to know the truth, not to be self-sufficient, not to be a slave to sin, to be a child of God, to receive the world. . . .The liberation Christ gives us is an integral one that embraces all dimensions of human existence and brings us into full communion with God and one another.[47]

Liberation is a journey, a pilgrimage in Christ through the guidance of the Holy Spirit toward God. Therefore, it is both being in the present and becoming in the future, in the long shadow of the cross, the once and for always symbol of God's unconditional love.

Summary

We have seen that liberation theologies are specific to a situation and a social reality. They arise from below out of the matrix of human

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[45] Gutierrez, Theology of Liberation, 204.

[46] Gutierrez, Theology of Liberation, 205.

[47] Gutierrez, Truth Shall Make You Free, 104.

experience. They are characterized by conscientization as a first step on a pilgrimage with Christ as Liberator who has a bias for the poor and the oppressed, however they are manifested in a particular social milieu.

Another element is the concept of self which is inextricably linked with both individual and socio-cultural experience, relational in nature as symbolized by Imago Dei, and future oriented.

A third element is the understanding that creation has a meaning and purpose moving toward fulfillment, therefore the self has a social destiny.

A fourth element is that any disorder in self or society and distortion of relationships is sin.

The fifth element is the concept of covenant as an ethic-laden relationship in which the self is grace-receiving and empowered and is thus capable of receptiveness. The spirituality of liberation is no less then conversion to God and neighbor.

The sixth element is the over-all concept of liberation. The Boffs have provided us a fitting summary statement in their quote from the Roman Catholic bishops assembled at Puebla:

> There are two complementary and inseparable elements: The first is liberation from all the forms of bondage, from personal and social sin, and from everything that tears apart the human individual and society; all this finds its source in egotism, in the mystery of iniquity. The second element is liberation for progressive growth in being through communion with God and other human beings; this reaches its culmination in the perfect communion of heaven, where God is all in all and weeping forever ceases.[48]

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[48] Evangelii nuntiandi, no. 91 as quoted in Boff and Boff, 52-53.

These two elements provide one underlying rationale for ministry among older adults. Identifying forms of bondage that afflict older adults, helping them to free themselves from these forms of oppression, and then to help them discover the means for claiming and growing their new life in God is the heart of the ministry.

Integration of the Psychological and Theological Components
of the Initiating Theory

The theories of Erikson, Rogers, as well as the liberation theologians all emerge out of human experience which is situational and is in a particular social context. Erikson and Rogers worked out of particular clinical settings in the United States, grounding their theories in the real life circumstances of their clients. The liberation theologians are rooted and grounded in the experience of a particular people in a particular real life context.

A basic truth for Erikson is that awareness is a key to ego-integrity; and for Rogers, awareness is a key for attaining full personhood. It is akin to conscientization as the fundamental first step toward freedom from bondage in the liberation theologies.

Erikson's and Rogers' concept of self is relational and future-oriented, just as it is in the liberation theologies. This relational capacity is a necessity for growth and change, which in turn, is a capacity and necessity for persons.

The concept of sin as disorder in self or society as well as a distortion of relationships is the growth-denying aspects of Erikson's life-cycle construct. This is particularly noted in the first stage with distrust,

and in the last stage with despair. The counterpart in Rogers' experience is incongruence in relationships, which leads to dysfunction in the self.

Rogers and the liberation theologians view creativity as a process moving toward fulfillment. The concept is not as central for Erikson, subsumed, as we have seen, in his postulate that creativity is a byproduct of generativity.

The fundamental bedrock for Erikson, Rogers, and the liberation theologians is the basic caveat of freedom. Freedom to be and to become, to grow and to change, to realize social goals and in so doing, to be fulfilled as persons. For Erikson, individual freedom is often the result of one's conscious choice. Social freedom is predicated on reciprocal need, also implying choice. For Rogers, individual freedom is a choice set within the context of the experience of learning to be free. Rogers believed freedom is an interior dynamic which has social consequences in relationships. For liberation theologians, freedom is a conscious choice of a people and is exercised in a particular way in a particular social context in relation to God and to neighbor.

As previously stated in this project, Carl Rogers complements Erik Erikson by providing not only further content, but also a means to approach the ministry through unconditional positive regard, acceptance, congruence, and empathy. The application of these four guiding principles as the accepted norm for interpersonal relationships in the project allows older adults in turn to explore more deeply their interior feelings and unresolved issues over a life-time. Additionally, they facilitate the spiraling back into various aspects of the life-cycle stages to find new depth of purpose and enrichment of meaning for an

older adult's life in the present.

All of this is made possible as older adults experience unconditional positive regard as children of God and become more self-aware; they experience acceptance, the radical acceptance of the Gospel and become more self-accepting and accepting of others; they experience congruence, a deep form of relatedness, where the participants in the project are so attuned to the feelings of each other that they perceive Christ at work in one another; they experience empathy, the compassion that lies at the heart of agape. The end result is that participants are able to experience themselves and others fully in relationship and achieve a new wholeness, sense of self, and a freedom to be and to become who they are in reality, children of God and citizens in God's Kingdom.

This is nothing less than the innate process of self-actualization that was postulated by A. H. Maslow as a result of his investigation of a group of past and contemporary people that he adjudged to be self-actualizing. He was able to identify the following characteristic behaviors among his research subjects who he felt were optimal human beings living to their full potential. These same characteristic behaviors are useful indicators for gauging the effectiveness of the project as we see them develop in the lives and relationships of the older adults in the parish.

1. They are realistically oriented.
2. They accept themselves, other people, and the natural world for what they are.
3. They have a great deal of spontaneity
4. They are problem-centered rather than self-centered.
5. They have an air of detachment and a need for privacy.
6. They are autonomous and independent.

7. Their appreciation of people and things is fresh rather than stereotyped.
8. Most of them have had profound mystical or spiritual experiences...
9. They identify with mankind.
10. Their intimate relationships with a few specially loved people tend to be profound and deeply emotional rather than superficial.
11. Their values and attitudes are democratic.
12. They do not confuse means and ends.
13. Their sense of humor is philosophical rather than hostile.
14. They have a great fund of creativeness.
15. They resist conformity to the culture.
16. They transcend the environment rather than just coping with it. [49]

The Theoretical Expansion of the Paradigm

Necessitated by Praxis

A seminal paradigm shift, that more than any other factor

distinguishes this project, came at the conclusion of the third year. We

were at a point when our own distinct form of liberation theology was

taking discernible shape as it arose our of our own particular ethos. We

had freed ourselves from many of the forces that bound us in the past,

integrated others into our self-understanding, and we had found a

vitalizing identity as a community. This evolved as we unfettered

ourselves from the forces of ageism in and out of the church. Just as we

needed Rogers to give us an approach into Erikson's formulations, so we

needed a form that was compatible with our tradition in which to live out

our emerging theological insights.

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[49] Hall and Lindzey, 270, citing A. H. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being 2nd ed. (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1968).

We found this form in the Benedictine approach to living the Christian life and the particular blend of elements that define Benedictine spirituality.

Certain constituents are central to Benedictine spirituality, and, also, to the understanding of Christian life that emerged among the older adults of All Saints by-the-Sea.

First, Benedictine living and spirituality are indistinguishable from each other. They both refer to an intentional way of being and doing in relationship to self, God, other, the world, and material possessions.

Second, people are called to the ordinary, not the extraordinary. Benedictine life is a life in which the goal is the sacrament of the ordinary. All of life becomes sacrament; "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace,"[50] and reality is experienced as a unity. Prayer is work and work is prayer, as is study, as is all one's relationships. Prayer and worship are the well-spring from which all else flows. The Christian life is lived in the everyday and the everyday is the grist for holiness.

Third, a guiding principle is finding and maintaining a balance in and between all the various aspects of one's life. A balance that may be achieved through moderation, not heroics.

Fourth, Benedict spoke of "a school for the Lord's service."[51]

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[50] "The Sacraments," The Book of Common Prayer, (New York: Church Hymnal Corporation, 1982), 857.

[51] [Benedict], Rule of St. Benedict in English, 18.

and recognizing human weakness, he incorporated into the Rule a

corrective for this weakness when he added,

> In drawing up its regulations, we hope to set down nothing
> harsh, nothing burdensome. The good of all concerned
> however, may prompt us to a little strictness in order to
> amend faults and to safe guard love.[52]

Another aspect of the purpose of the Benedictine school is intellectual

and spiritual growth of the individual and the community as a whole.

Fifth, the Benedictine way is with and through a safe community,

where each may be both teacher and student of the other. This is to be a

community committed to caring for and nurturing one another.

The application of these constituent elements of Benedictine

spirituality to our own context as a parish community was facilitated by

our rector, Dennis Odekirk. He wrote a memorandum to the parish vestry

in which he spoke of the application of Benedictine life to parish life.

> Benedictines see living the Gospel from three basic
> perspectives. First, it is a question of "obedience"--
> remaining faithful to our vision of and commitment to
> Christ. Secondly, it is a matter of "stability." My favorite
> contemporary expression of it is "Bloom where you are
> planted." Strong words to a transient society. And finally,
> it involves "conversatio"-- a difficult terms which suggests
> living, reflecting, learning, growing, and making our
> response to the Gospel concrete in the daily actions of
> life.[53]

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[52] [Benedict], Rule of St. Benedict in English, 18-19.

[53] Dennis R. Odekirk, memorandum to the Vestry, All Saints by-the-Sea
Episcopal Church, 21 June 1994.

The adaptation of these principles that stand behind Benedict's Rule offer a practical approach to living out the theological insights that have evolved in the ministry among older adults. The Benedictine model, based as it is in everyday life with an emphasis on being and becoming in Christian community, is ideally suited for our goals in ministry, for this model is nothing less than self-actualization under God in Christ.

Summary

The initiating theory for this project had its genesis in the integration of elements of Erikson's and Rogers' work and from comparable elements taken from liberation theologians' reflections on their contextual experience. Two paradigm shifts emerged out of the crucible of the project's praxis. Each one reflective of the growth of the participants into their new found freedom. The more the participants were free to be themselves by living in the present with an orientation to the future and deepening their relationships as a Christian community, the more it became evident that we were entering a new phase of our experience. This experience needed to be given some compatible contextual form that would channel the new identity and vitality that characterized this later phase. This form was found in an adaptation of Benedictine spirituality to our community. It is no coincidence that Benedictine spirituality had such an appeal for us. It was less a new idea and more a contextual confluence. Benedictine spirituality and Anglican roots have a common source. The Rector of the parish has often quoted Benedictine writers. The Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles and neighboring dioceses are home to a number of Benedictine communities. Benedictine spirituality, then, is a part of our ethos.

What is rather more unique and true to the nature of liberation

theologies as a whole, is the way in which the principles of Benedictine

spirituality were adapted at All Saints by-the-Sea among the older adults.

The truth that lies at the heart of the project participants' experience in

community is the truth that lies at the heart of what Gustavo Gutierrez

has written,

> Not only is there a contemporary history and a
> contemporary Gospel; there is also a contemporary
> spiritual experience which cannot be overlooked. A
> spirituality means a reordering of the great axes of the
> Christian life in terms of this contemporary experience.
> What is new is the synthesis that this reordering brings
> about, in stimulating a deepened understanding of various
> ideas, in bringing to the surface unknown or forgotten
> aspects of the Christian life, and above all, in the way in
> which these things are converted into life, prayer,
> commitment, and action.[54]

It is in the spirit of that synthesis, and with the integrated

initiating theory in mind, that we turn now to the narrative case study

in which the initiating theory was applied and in which the paradigm

shifts occurred as the project unfolded.

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[54] Gutierrez, Theology of Liberation, 117.

CHAPTER 3

NARRATIVE CASE STUDY

The parish in which the project was conducted is located in an unincorporated community considered to be a suburb of the City of Santa Barbara, California. Santa Barbara, situated one hundred miles west of Los Angeles, has a population of slightly less than 100,000. The city is over two hundred years old. It was originally formed around one of the Franciscan missions that were founded at set distances along the western edge of California, stretching from the border with Mexico north to San Francisco. The residents of Santa Barbara have a strong sense of identity with the city, and a majority have chosen to live here. The economy is based on education, research, smokeless industry, agriculture, and tourism.

Santa Barbara is characterized in part by the steady number of retirees who come and make the city and its environs their home for their later years. There was a particular influx of older adults at the time of the civil rights riots in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 70s. The quality of the environment also draws people to settle in or near the city. Because of the nature of the population, there are a number of institutions and activities of unusually high quality for a city of this size. These include a full range of performing and visual arts, opportunities for further education through the University of California, City College, and Westmont College. A variety of outdoor activities provided to take advantage of the juxtaposition of seashore, mountains, and the Mediterranean-like environment. There are three large retirement

communities as well as several smaller ones. Santa Barbara prides itself on the high degree of volunteerism and philanthropic generosity of its citizens, and consequently there is a large percentage of local support for all the public institutions, agencies, and services.

The parish itself is currently planning for its centennial celebration. Originally, the parish was established as a mission of the Episcopal parish in the downtown area, but quickly became a parish in its own right. Over the past one hundred years, it has grown into a corporation sized congregation, with nine hundred and eighty-five adults on its parish rolls at the commencement of this project in 1992. These parishioners and their families live in a large area extending from the city of Carpenteria in the east to Goleta in the west, a distance of thirty-five miles.

The adults in the congregation, who have identified their age and marital status, are comprised of approximately sixty percent women and forty percent men. Of the forty percent of men, eighty-two percent are married, as opposed to the sixty-three percent of women who are married. This means seventy-one percent of the adults in the congregation are married and twenty-nine percent are unmarried. Sixty-one percent of the adults range from eighteen to sixty years of age. The remaining thirty-nine percent, or three-hundred and eighty-five persons, are between the ages of sixty-one and one-hundred-two.[1]

The Parish Profile is the compilation of the results of a survey taken among all parishioners in 1992 in preparation for the search

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[1] Parish Profile, All Saints by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, 1992, 14.

for a new rector. The Profile describes the parishioners in the following

way

> We encompass a wide range of ages with a great diversity
> of interests. We are typically well-educated, literate in
> the arts and sciences, widely traveled, and have a long
> tradition of volunteer service in our community. We
> enthusiastically embrace the Anglican tradition at the
> same time acknowledging its continuing evolution through
> new ideas, experimentation, and change.
>
> Our commitment to the form of a corporation-size church
> reinforces the goal of ensuring that spiritual growth and
> worship remain the spindle and thread which weave the
> fabric of this parish. We want to continue to develop a
> strong framework to support the broad increase of
> activities generated by our significant growth.
>
> Large numbers emphasize the importance of
> communication, interaction, and caring among the
> many groups. We look forward to developing a dynamic
> fellowship among us, one that invites full participation of
> everyone in the life of our parish. We want to build faith
> and hope in the lives of our young people and to
> contribute honor and dignity to our elderly. [2]

This statement captures the texture, self-understanding, and spirit of

this parish. There is also an excitement and openness to new forms of

ministry in the future.

The Initial Design of the Paradigm

The project method, characterized by narrative case study, is the

Pro-Active Research Model described by William Myers and discussed in

Chapter 1 of this project. It is a particularly helpful qualitative model for

ministerial research as it allowed the researcher to be an active

participant in the research process. This was a critical consideration

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[2] Parish Profile, All Saints by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, 1992, 8.

because the principal researcher, a priest, also had the primary responsibility for ministry among the older adults in the parish.

A number of research tools are used in this project. They include the following; a parish profile; program descriptions and evaluations; retreat outlines; agendas; minutes; questionnaires; needs assessments; interviews; the researcher's journal notes; course outlines; older adult initiatives; reports of workshops with outside leaders, including James Birren and Emma Lou Benignus; intergenerational events; inreach/outreach reports; library research; and the experience of attending a summer workshop at St. Dieniol's Library, Hawarden, Wales to increase the researcher's knowledge of Benedictine spirituality in order to effect one of two major paradigm shifts. Samples of the more widely and consistently used tools are included in Appendix A.

Congruent with the research method, the initiating process for the project was, in the first words of the Prologue to Benedict's Rule, "Listen carefully."[3] This statement became a guiding principle throughout the project. Listening involved a series of interviews with individual parishioners who represented a cross-cut of the older adult segment of the parish. These interviews ranged from the frail elderly in retirement community medical centers to those in their own homes. The active older adults interviewed were residents in the retirement communities, some people living in their own homes, and some who lived with adult children in a variety of arrangements. Many variations existed in the older adults involvement in the parish. Some were very active in all phases of parish

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[3] [Benedict], Rule of St. Benedict in English, 15.

life, others limited their involvement to attending Sunday services of worship on a regular or irregular basis. Still others considered themselves members, but because of physical disability, lack of commitment or unstated reasons, were on the periphery of parish life.

These individual interviews were all conducted by the principal researcher at the outset of the project. The interviews with the frail elderly were centered around two questions; do you feel connected with All Saints by-the-Sea? and how would you complete this sentence: I wish All Saints would......... The interviews with the active older adults centered around four questions:

How long have you been a parishioner of All Saints?

What current programs do you participate in?

Do you feel we need a program designed for senior parishioners?

What needs do you feel you and other senior parishioners have?
The responses to both sets of interviews were complied by the principal researcher and the results reported to the Senior Ministries Council.

The principal researcher found that uniformly the message of the interviewees was clear; all believed there should be some form of ministry among older adults to meet their felt needs. These needs included opportunities for spiritual growth, fellowship and education, discussion of current events, outreach to the larger community, visitation with frail and shut-in parishioners, age-specific trips and events. The principal researcher, in analyzing the responses to the interviews, identified the emergence of the need to feel connected, to have a positive identity, to feel useful, and to deepen their relationship with God and with each other on the part of the interviewees.

The entity established to consider and utilize the data that arose

out of these interviews was the Senior Ministries Council, which had

been established six months before the actual project was instituted. The

Council was representative of the various groups of older adults in the

parish. It had recognized many of the needs that emerged out of this

researcher's interviews at its initial meeting and had adopted a

provisional structure (Appendix B) and a preliminary mission statement

that would be revised if necessary to reflect the responses to the

interviews:

> The Senior Ministries Council seeks to respond to the
> needs of those over fifty-five in our Parish. This includes 1)
> 'active' seniors who seek fellowship, worship, service,
> educational opportunities at the Parish and 2) 'frail' seniors
> who are large shut-in with special needs: sacraments,
> transportation, visitation, housing, and health care.[4]

The principal interviewer was willing to submit her findings to the

Council to determine whether the interview responses confirmed that the

mission statement and the structure were reflective of the data and were

broad enough to accommodate both the initiating theory and the basic

approach to praxis of this project. Further, the Senior Ministries

Council, because it was representative, would serve as an important

check and balance to the perceptions of the researcher. The Council was

utilized for this purpose to maintain the integrity of the research design.

Given the fundamental guiding principle of allowing the paradigm to

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[4] Minutes, Senior Ministries Council Meeting, All Saints by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, April 1992.

evolve from among the participants, the next step was to launch the project by convening the Senior Ministries Council. The narrative case study that follows begins with that Senior Ministries Council meeting.

The First Year: 1992-1993

September 1992

The Senior Ministries Council was convened in early September 1992. It was composed of ten individuals who were representative of a cross section of the older adults in the parish as well as several parishioners who were practicing professional counselors and a registered nurse who served as consultants to the Council.

Researcher's Presentation

The first order of business was an opening statement by the Associate for Senior Ministries, this principal researcher, on the initiating theory and on the basis for our ministry together. The principal researcher summarized general points made in the previous chapter, the purpose being to establish some parameters from which the Council might proceed with its work. The basic ideas of Erikson were described, especially the need for life review in order to achieve ego-integrity in the last stage of life. This understanding was then integrated with Rogers' approach of unconditional positive regard, entering non-anxiously into the constituent realities of another person's world with empathy, and one's own authentic self.

Theologically, emphasis was placed on greeting Christ in the other, no matter how deeply Christ might be disguised or hidden. Additionally, several other principles were offered for our common ministry, based on the work of Carl Rogers and liberation theologies. The essential points

were the freedom and responsibility of each individual to make choices; that a person discovers himself in his experience and not apart from it or by an imposition on it.[5] Rogers sees free and undistorted awareness as a gift and an unique human capacity which is integral for growth, change, and self-actualization in a relational context. This extends into perceiving reality as it is and not in preconceived categories.[6]

Reflection

Several other aspects of the theoretical foundations were shared, along with the idea that we would proceed by allowing the theory to remain fluid and responsive to our new experience and reflection on that experience. We would keep reminding ourselves and each other that we are committed to theory and practice from below, that is arising out of the milieu of our life together, and not imposed from some other source. This principle is congruent with the understanding taken from liberation theologies, that theology arises out of its social contextual reality. In conjunction with this principle, we would also keep reminding ourselves of the parallel question: Is what we are doing replicating a social service agency or are we uniquely involved in the ministry entrusted to us?

These reflections led us to reexamine the preliminary mission statement of the Senior Ministries Council in the light of this theoretical base that we had agreed upon. Even with the responses to the

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[5] Rogers, On Becoming a Person, 104.

[6] Rogers, On Becoming a Person, 105.

individual interviews, the Council believed that we did not have enough data to warrant any changes until we had heard and experienced more among a wider range of older adults in the parish.

<u>Goals for the Coming Year</u>

The Council then turned its attention to establishing goals and priorities for the coming year with the recognition that in reality we were discussing the needs of three generations under the umbrella of older adult ministry.

This fact resulted in the Council establishing some guidelines that delineated the three segments: first, the frail elderly and shut-ins who could no longer attend services of worship and programs outside of their housing arrangement; second, those older adults who had some problems with one or more of the following -- physical mobility, mental acuity, hearing and sight loss; and third, those older adults who had all their faculties or had minor impairments to their ability to fully function. The Council decided that a special program would be instituted to address the needs of the first group, and it would have first priority in this initial year of older adult ministry. The other two groups would be treated together, though a balance of programming would be offered, taking into consideration the limitations of the second group.

The Council established goals for the first group composed of the frail elderly and shut-ins to be accomplished by the spring of 1993. These goals were: (1) to further identify and connect them to the community; (2) to address loneliness and the sense of uselessness; (3) to address spiritual, emotional, and physical needs; (4) to offer unconditional acceptance and positive regard as valued members of

the body of Christ; and (5) listen to their articulation of needs that might be met by the church community.

Means to achieve these goals were developed at this meeting. The Council would draw on the pastoral training of the clergy to assist in the development of a lay visitors' program. This included accessing the parish data base for all parishioners over sixty years of age, and determining who fell within this category. Selection and training of lay visitors followed, utilizing resources within the parish, including a doctor, a nurse, and a professional counselor, as well as a member of the clergy staff. Subsequently, nine lay visitors were paired with one or more of the thirty-six frail elderly or shut-in parishioners who had been visited by this researcher and who had indicated they would like to be involved in this program. The lay visitors committed themselves to at least one visit a month, with telephone calls in the interim providing such calls would be appropriate and welcome. The lay visitors remained directly under the supervision of a member of the clergy who is always available to them. They agreed to meet on a regular basis for group supervision, on-going training, and accountability for those entrusted into their care. The Council suggested to the clergy, and it was agreed, that audio tapes would be available to the frail elderly and shut-ins on their request, particularly cassettes of services of worship and sermons. The parish purchased several very simple and portable audio cassette tape receivers with ear phones to lend to those who did not own or have access to one.

A Lay Eucharistic Minister was especially trained for carrying Holy Communion to those in this group of older adults who desired it on a schedule that seemed appropriate to the recipients. This was supplemented with clergy calls, particularly during times of hospitalization or personal crisis. This program was began immediately with the understanding it would be evaluated the following spring by the Council with input from the clergy, the Lay Eucharistic Minister, and the recipients.

The goals for the active older adults were: (1) to offer opportunities for spiritual growth; (2) to facilitate self-determination; (3) to actualize Erikson's last stage task of ego-integrity; (4) to utilize Roger's theory to promote community building through practicing unconditional positive regard; and (5) to raise consciousness of their own sense of identity and self- worth rather than allowing themselves to be defined by the United States' societal bias against older adults or by those acculturated attitudes toward older adults found in the church community.

Programming

The process for meetings these goals developed into two major segments. First, the Council would listen to what the older adults indicated they needed through a tea to gather people together and a program to determine their needs and interests and let the program evolve rather than start with a fully developed one. Second, the Council recognized the need to start somewhere so they decided to begin with the need for life review as Erikson has described it. The method the Council selected was guided autobiography. On the recommendation of this researcher, they invited James Birren, one of the authors of

<u>Guiding Autobiography Groups for Older Adults</u>, and the Director

of the Anna and Harry Borun Center for Gerontological Research at the

University of California, Los Angeles, to lead a workshop in the parish.[7]

Dr. and Mrs. Birren agreed to come on the first Saturday in October. The

workshop was given wide publicity among the older adults, and

particularly at the tea which was scheduled for late September.

The mid-September tea was a garden party held on the Church

grounds. Members of the Council took prime responsibility to serve as

hosts and hostesses to ensure that people were introduced to each other.

They also served as table leaders for the discussion of the "menu" of

suggested program areas to determine need and interest. There were fifty

older adults present, with thirty registering for Dr. Birren's workshop.

The "menu" selection results according to the number who were interested

were: (1) autobiographical workshop; (2) day trips to various religious

sites; (3) small brown bag lunch groups, preferably in people's homes, for

socializing and making new friends; (4) quiet day for older adults on

"Spirituality for Seniors;" (5) tea and talk by one of the founders of SEE

INTERNATIONAL (a non-profit organization that sponsors eye clinics in

disadvantaged areas and Third World Countries); (6) establishment of a

film group to view suggested films followed by a group discussion;

suggestions were such films as <u>Shadowlands</u>, <u>Babette's Feast</u>, and <u>Sister

Act</u>.

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[7] Minutes, Senior Ministries Council, 8 Sept. 1992.

A number of suggestions were made for workshops and discussion groups that were indicative of both interest and need:

(1) prayer and approaches to prayer, particularly intercession;

(2) Psalms and learning to sing them;

(3) preparations for the next disaster(fire or earthquake);

(4) social changes which are biblically acceptable;

(5) interaction with other denominations;

(6) history of the parish, with emphasis on humorous incidents;

(7) should the Social Gospel prevail;

(8) a report from the Search for a New Rector Committee;

(9) what we learn from life experiences;

(10) how to live life victoriously;

(11) major turning points in our walks with the Lord; and

(12) experiences or verses from Scripture which brought wisdom to live victoriously in some area of life.

In addition, one table group developed the idea of a Seniors' art and crafts show for the spring and offered to organize it.[8]

The workshop with Dr. and Mrs. Birren resulted in thirty-two attendees. The Birrens explained their technique and the rationale for it through a variety of methods that sparked enthusiasm and a good deal of laughter. Attendees had the opportunity to register for on-going groups, and thirteen people agreed to spent two hours a week for ten weeks engaged in a topical writing of their autobiographies. The people were divided into groups clustered around the day and time of the week that

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[8] Menu tabulations from the Tea on 14 Sept. 1992 (see Appendix A).

was most convenient for them. The specific "homework" assignment for each session was taken from Dr. Birren's book and incorporated with suggested topics from B. J. Hateley's book, Telling Your Story, Exploring Your Faith.[9] At the end of the ten weeks, the two groups were brought together for an evaluation session. All of the participants reported on evaluation sheets that it had been a valuable experience because it was a contribution to their own self-understanding, a gift to their children and grandchildren that was unique, and they had made new friends on a deeply personal level.[10] The two groups did not want to disband, even though it had been strongly recommended. The members decided among themselves that those who wished would meet once a month as an "alum group."

October 1992

The Council met in the middle of October to discuss the results of the Tea and of the Birren Workshop.

The suggestions that came from the Tea were weighed against the goals the Council had set in early September. The Council's assessment was that the older adult interests cluster around areas of education, life review, and fellowship. The Council approved moving ahead with the autobiographical groups and the film group because of the interest in these two activities. The Council felt the Quiet Day with the theme of senior spirituality and further workshops should be planned for the

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[9] B. J. Hateley, Telling Your Story, Exploring Your Faith (St. Louis: CBP Press, 1985).

[10] Participants in the evaluation of Autobiographical Groups, 8 Dec. 1992.

spring of 1993. The rationale was that it would be a mistake to "over program;" it would be wiser to provide a few programs well, and the autobiographical groups were solidly based in the Birren workshop. The day trips component was tabled until the first of the year as the Council saw wisdom in waiting until the days were longer because it was difficult for seniors to drive at dusk. The Council did decide to hold one purely social "brown bag" lunch event because of the interest expressed at the Tea. The Council was skeptical that such an event would be successful without some theme; however, they felt it would be inconsistent with the theoretical base they had chosen not to be responsive to an expressed interest. The caveat in their giving approval was that it would be tried once, and then evaluated to see if it should be held again.

Considerable energy was generated over the suggestion of a seniors' art show due to the many older adult artists and crafts people in the parish. The Council appointed a subcommittee to organize this event for the spring of 1993 and to work with those who had volunteered at the Tea.

The Council heard a report from the principal researcher, who was also the clergy liaison, that the Lay Visitors' program was functioning according to plan and the visitors were reporting regularly on the development of their relationships with the frail elderly and shut-ins entrusted to their care. They agreed that all programs and activities would be evaluated and the results of these evaluations would be

presented to next Council meeting in January of 1993.[11]

<u>January 1993</u>

The January Council meeting represented the halfway mark in our first year's experience. The agenda was divided into two segments. The first was a period given to reflection on the past six months and the second was focused on building program resulting from that reflection.

The Council received reports on the Lay Visitors' program. "There are currently ten Lay Visitors calling regularly on thirty-eight shut-ins. The Lay Eucharistic Minister continues to assist the clergy by taking Holy Communion to a number shut-is and seniors with special needs."[12] The clergy liaison added that the Lay Visitors had met every other month with her and wanted to inform the Council of two new factors that have developed in this program. The first is the warm reception and appreciation the shut-ins evidenced by the Sunday School classes sending valentines to them, albeit a few weeks early. By consensus, the Council voted to send a note of thanks to the Sunday School for conceiving and following through on this valentine event and to communicate how grateful the shut-ins are for their thoughtfulness. They noted that this was a truly intergenerational activity that they could build upon, and consideration of another intergenerational event would be considered in the second segment of the meeting.

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[11] Minutes, Senior Ministries Council, 14 Oct. 1992.

[12] Minutes, Senior Ministries Council, 27 Jan. 1993.

The second factor is the experience of Lay Visitors calling on parishioners in the medical facilities of retirement communities and in nursing homes. The Visitors find that non-parishioners want attention from them too.

The autobiographical groups, who had just concluded their last session and evaluation, reported excellent and continuous attendance with everyone completing their assignments for all the sessions. The evaluation from one group stated "we found out we loved each other."[13] The other group's evaluation stated they were very positive about their experience and "the opportunity to not only share their writing but also the emotions that the writing brought forth."[14] The evaluations all indicated that "this kind of activity is real for Seniors."[15] Further, all the participants want to continue and have formed an alumni/ae group on their own that will meet once a month to share their current writing. They have requested the leaders meet with them for continuity.

The Council noted that the experience to date with this program bore out the theoretical assumption of both Erikson's clinical observation of the need for ego-integrity through life review and Rogers'

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[13] Minutes, Senior Ministries Council, 27 Jan. 1993.

[14] Minutes, Senior Ministries Council, 27 Jan. 1993.

[15] Minutes, Senior Ministries Council, 27 Jan. 1993.

stance, particularly the statement that "a person discovers himself in his experience and not apart from it or by an imposition on it."[16] The two group leaders' evaluations reflected on the importance of empathy and unconditional positive regard as guiding principles in the conduct of the group and how this seemed to facilitate deep sharing and the resolution of a number of issues in the lives of participants. In addition, the Council noted that this program had begun the process of consciousness raising for a new sense of individual and corporate positive identity among the participants that might well become a model for non-participants among the older adults in the parish. The Council was heartened by the initiative of the groups in forming an alumi/ae group on their own. One Council member reflected that this was consistent with the goal of self-determination!

The evaluation of the monthly film program indicated it was appreciated but very poorly attended. The discussion after the film was not very successful. The participants seemed polite but impatient with the discussion and eager to leave at the conclusion of the film. The Council reflected that this program may be an interest that could be met by a secular agency. The question the Council raised for consideration was, how might films be used in a way that is more congruent with the goals for this ministry?

The second segment of the meeting took up each program, and in light of the reflections on it, the Council made the following decisions: The Lay Visitors' experience of non-parishioners' requesting a Visitor

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[16] Rogers, On Becoming a Person, 104-05.

was seen as an opportunity for evangelism, and the program would be encouraged to expand to non-parishioners who wish to be included in it. The parish clergy would be asked to also submit names to the Lay Visitors of non-parishioner residents of these medical centers who attend the monthly Eucharist.

The autobiographical group program would continue by offering new groups from time to time and by encouraging the alumni/ae group since this method seemed to be meeting the need for life review as well as the needs for fellowship and for enabling new friendships.

A member of the Council suggested a new direction for the interest in films that could be combined with the desire for another intergenerational event. She offered to ask her husband, the co-producer of the film Born Free to show the film, describe how it was made, and to reflect on its meaning for him as a movie that is based on a theology of ecology. The nature of such an event would be framed as an "adopt a grandparent night" where older adults and parish children would be paired to share supper, view the film, and share in the discussion together. There would be a report on the development of this program at the May 1993 meeting.

The Senior Arts and Crafts Show was scheduled with a number of artist parishioners responding, including some who have been peripheral to the ongoing life of the parish. This prompted the Council to decide to have a tea in conjunction with the Show to encourage fellowship. The Show was seen as an opportunity to share more deeply, and artists were encouraged to be present and to discuss their work with all those who came to view it. This may be understood as another dimension of the

process leading to ego-integrity through the medium of original arts and crafts.

The Council turned its attention to future program development areas for the coming year which begins in the fall of 1993. These areas include a fall tea with an evaluation of the past year's program and another interest poll for the coming year, a Quiet Day on the theme of spirituality for seniors, the activation of the "brown bag" lunch group, and some day trips. The Council cautioned against adding too much too quickly as seniors should be encouraged to participate in over-all parish programming as well. The Council decided not to offer any workshops as there were some planned for the whole parish.

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May 1993

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The May meeting of the Council again was divided into segments, first, to hear reports, second, to reflect on those reports, and third, to develop initial goals and program for the new year commencing September 1, 1993.

Reports

The Lay Visitor program is in full operation and every indication from the recipients, Lay Visitors, and clergy is that the program is meeting the goals set forth at the beginning of the program year in September, 1992.

The Autobiographical Alumni/ae continue to meet once a month with a clergy liaison to support each other in the continuation of their writing and to share their latest chapter.

The Senior Art and Crafts Show was evaluated as an important program event, not only judging by the number of participants, but also

by the level of sharing and discussion. There were twenty-eight artists exhibiting their work with over fifty older adults attending the tea. The Show ran for several weeks which gave the entire parish the opportunity to view it during the coffee hours after Sunday services of worship.

The "Adopt a Grandparent" and <u>Born Free</u> supper and film event was scheduled for July fourteenth as a major summer event for the entire parish family.

<u>Reflection</u>

The second segment of the meeting was given to reflection on how the program, to this point, was achieving the goals for the year and reflecting the initiating theoretical stance. The Council agreed that the program was in tune with the goals and that the evaluations of individual programs all pointed to that fact.

The Lay Visitors continued to report that their relationships were deepening with their shut-ins and that the shut-ins said they felt more connected to the ongoing life of the parish.

The tracking of the autobiographical group participants revealed the interesting piece of data that they were more involved in various aspects of parish life and volunteering for more responsibility.

The Art and Crafts Show had taken on a life of its own as it turned into an intergenerational event. Some Council members observed that judging from the interactions at the Show, the artists seemed to have a heightened awareness of their own identity as they talked with parishoners viewing their work. They noted that the Show had offered an opportunity for the artists to change perceptions of themselves and to experience others' perceptions of them. One example cited was the

animated conversation between a ninety-four year old sculptress of horses and the group of young people surrounding her, all asking about and complimenting her on her work.

The Council discussed an emerging perception that there was a marked change generally in how older adults in the parish perceived themselves and how the rest of the parish perceived them. This was noted in several areas: the number of older adults who were becoming more deeply involved in all aspects of parish life; the fact that they were more articulate in discussions; the ways their opinions were sought by younger parishioners; and the references in random interviews conducted by Council members to the importance seniors placed on the various aspects of the older adult program for the quality of their lives.

This discussion turned to how the theoretical basis for the over-all program might need to be adjusted. The Council saw a potential need for a modifying the theoretical base, which could, in turn, lead to a paradigm shift. As the vanguard of the older adults became, in Roger's terms, more fully-functional, the present and the future opened up for them in a remarkable way. The participants seemed to be claiming and living into a new found freedom to determine the quality of their lives. The energy and momentum this movement toward freedom generated needed to be factored into the theoretical basis for the goals and program for the next year. The question was no longer how might the Council design program to assist them to integrate their past and to work on unresolved issues. The question became: What is to be the ministry in this new reality where older adults have a new/renewed sense of identity in the present, are claiming their freedom to be, as well as building a

community within the larger parish community for support and greater solidarity?

The Council came to realize through this discussion, that they were satisfied recognize the validity of questioning the theoretical base, not being bound by it, and being open to what might emerge through the process. As one member of the Council said: "We need to listen carefully, for none of us have been this old before. We have been given a gift which we have admired, but we haven't fully unwrapped yet."[17] In actuality, they also recognized that, while some older adults had taken full advantage of the program, others had not, and so they needed to be careful to steer a middle way with both theory and praxis. The decision was to offer a workshop at the beginning of the new program year to address this question of how to unwrap this new gift and its implications both theoretically and practically for the over-all program.

Goals for the Coming Year

The Council preceded to establish goals for the coming year, subject to modification after the fall workshop and tea. The goals for the ministry among the frail elderly and shut-ins were:

(1) to continue to expand the previous year's program;

(2) to open the program to non-parishioners in the community; and

(3) to develop closer relationships with retirement community personnel.

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[17] Permission given to quote anonymously, interview by researcher, 25 May 1993.

Progammatically, this meant that they would:

(1) conduct a survey of parish records to identify inactive members and to make sure that they were contacted in some way on their birthdays and other life anniversaries;

(2) invite all parishioners to submit names of non-parishioners for the program; and

(3) arrange meetings with the nursing staffs and activity directors of retirement communities to determine how we might open the lines of communication with each other for our mutual benefit.

The goals for the active older adults were:

(1) to build on the previous year's ministry with deepening of our commitment to offer opportunities for spiritual growth;

(2) to expand the understanding of self-determination and freedom;

(3) to evaluate the need for a theoretical shift in the paradigm after the fall workshop; and

(4) to begin developing further opportunities for placement of seniors in the parish's outreach programs.

The program designed to meet these goals consisted of several events:

(1) arranging for a fall tea that would include an opportunity for the attendees to share their program ideas and interests with the Council members;

(2) developing a workshop focused on the new quality of life older adults in the program were experiencing with suggestions on how that life might be lived. This researcher, as clergy liaison, was asked to arrange

for the workshop, using her judgment as to who might provide the most helpful leadership for it.

(3) instituting a "brown bag" lunch group named Senior Search, organizing around a series of themes that will serve as a vehicle for spiritual growth and development;

(4) planning for several day trips;

(5) involving older adults in the Community Kitchen serving lunches to the homeless, and Transition House preparing a meal and serving as proctors in this facility that offers temporary room and board for the disadvantaged;

(6) coordinating a parish intergenerational event sponsored by older adults;

(7) continuing the autobiographical group;

(8) implementing a consciousness raising retreat, tentatively entitled "the Potter's Use for Old Clay";

(9) arranging for a spring tea with program evaluation and needs assessment; and

(10) evaluating the year and goal setting by the Senior Ministries Council.[18]

The Second Year: 1993-1994

This researcher, as the clergy liaison with the Senior Ministries Council charged with the responsibility for the fall workshop, contacted Emma Lou Benignus. Benignus is a retired professor of pastoral theology at the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, a founder of

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[18] Minutes, Senior Ministries Council, 12 May 1993.

the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, Washington, D.C., former head of the American Baptist Church's multi-faceted Alternatives for the Aging Program, and in the immediate past, focused on one aspect of that program, the spiritual growth of older adults. Additionally, she was instrumental in founding the Episcopal Society for Ministry to the Aging.

Benignus agreed to lead a meditative workshop in the parish on August 30th to inaugurate our second year. We were able to arrange for the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles' Commission on Affirmative Aging to share the expense of bringing Benignus from Pennsylvania by her agreeing to do a workshop for them too.

The workshop was focused on addressing the issue the Council had identified. Benignus entitled it "Primacy of the Heart." This is based on her premise that the content of this gift of longevity should be centered in matters of heart. She stated, in a letter to this researcher, "that in my experience one of the gifts of aging is the freedom to heed the heart's insights."[19] She developed this theme by reflecting on three Scriptural passages: The first focus was Mark 10:21-22, in which the young man is told to sell all and follow Jesus. Benignus saw a parallelism between this story and the lives of many of the elderly. They have had to relinquish much of what they held dear, and maybe more will be asked. The question she posed for meditation is: "Do we lament or do we see this as a new freedom?" The second focus was on John 1:49-51, the story of Nathaniel under the fig tree. Here the question for meditation is three-fold: Is it possible that Jesus has seen me? Do I want to be seen by

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[19] Emma Lou Benignus, letter to this researcher, 6 June 1993.

Jesus and my knowing Jesus? The third focus was on John 3:1-9, in which Dr. Benignus spoke of spiritual freedom. She said:

> One of the gifts of the aging experience is the freedom to be born anew . . . to speak of what we know, witness to what we have seen, and to receive, at least consider, the heavenly things Jesus and the Spirit would tell us... such as the primacy of the heart. He invites us to join him in loving and not to count the cost. We are free to love the unlovable; to spend hours in company with Jesus, to follow the Spirit's lead. Spiritual freedom is aging's great gift. How can we help one another claim it?"[20]

The content of this meditative workshop came not only authentically out of her own experience of this gift of longevity, but it spoke directly to the reflections of the Council. Fifty older adults attended this workshop, including the members of the Council and several non-parishioners as guests. All of the evaluations indicated how valuable the meditations were, how it opened new insights for the participants in understanding themselves and their peers at this stage in their lives, and how they felt they had a new sense of self-worth, direction, purpose, and meaning. The participants asked for another meditative workshop in the spring of 1994 to continue building on this theme of spiritual growth and understanding in the older adult years.

The "Adopt a Grandparent" supper, film, Born Free, and discussion on July 14, 1993, was attended by over sixty people. It was truly an intergenerational event with the young people and older adults' enjoying the film and having ample time to discuss it with the co-producer and with each other. The evaluations highlighted the evening's real sense of

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[20] Emma Lou Benignus, "Primacy of the Heart," meditations delivered at All Saints by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, 30 Aug. 1993.

fun and laughter, and the opportunity to discuss a real issue (a theology of ecology) across generational perspectives and find a common ground.[21]

September 22, 1993

The Senior Ministries Council met on September 22, 1993 to receive reports from the Lay Visitors' program; the Autobiographical Alumni/ae; Meditative Workshop; "Adopt a Grandparent" event; planning committee for the Senior Search "brown bag" group; and the planners for the fall Tea who were developing means for evaluating, gathering new ideas, and welcoming the new Rector and his wife.

Reflection

The period for reflection focused on the importance of the Meditative Workshop for the participants. The Council also reviewed the basic underlying principles of the whole Senior Ministries program, with particular attention given to the relevance of Rogers' contribution integrated with the elements of liberation theologies. The consensus was that we were observer-participants in an experience of freedom that was precipitating a sea-change in the comprehension of older adult spirituality. We had new insights as to how the older adults understood themselves and each other, and this was giving renewed direction to their lives, manifesting itself in a number of different ways.

The Council felt the integration of Rogers' theory and elements of liberation theologies continue to provide an adequate theoretical perspective; however, they questioned whether what we were experiencing was a post-Erikson formulation, namely, a stage beyond his last stage in

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[21] Participants' evaluation of "Adopt a Grandparent" event, 12 Sept. 1993.

which the task is the exploration of the new freedom for spiritual growth in the context of a renewed sense of self in community. The possibility of a new stage and its concomitant tasks was adopted as a working hypothesis which would be reviewed at the end of the current program year.

Goals for the Coming Year

The format for the Senior Search six session discussion series was approved as a next step in developing substance in the program. The rationale for the program and the invitation to join this series was expressed in these words published in the parish newsletter:

> Many of the accepted rules for proper social conduct have been broken under the weight of the changed conditions and attitudes in which we now live.... We older Christians who grew up in a more stable environment, have been caught between rejecting the incursions or reluctantly tolerating them. This leaves us with uneasy consciences, since it seems disloyal to our Christian commitment.
>
> This is an invitation to Seniors to meet in a small group for six weeks to discuss the possibilities for Christian solutions for our changing social problems. The basic principles Christ gave us by which to live abundantly were not just adequate for life in His day. If in a small group we can consider them as The Way for our time, too, our earnest searching must bring some fresh and helpful insights.
> The six topics to be considered are:
>> When is the "Bible Ethics" Christian?
>> When is Marriage Christian?
>> When is Sexuality Christian?
>> When is Economics Christian?
>> When is "health care" Christian?
>> When is Retirement Christian?[22]

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[22] "Senior Search," Soundings (Santa Barbara, Calif: All Saints by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, 26 Sept. 1993).

The remainder of the meeting was a discussion of the Tea to be held on October 29th. The design was the same as the previous year with the theme of a "Wishing Well," inviting the attendees to reflect first on what has been done over the last year, what is being done, and

what programs they would like to see in the future (see Appendix A).[23]

November 10, 1993

The Senior Ministries Council met again on November 10, 1993, to evaluate the tea, to receive a report on the questionnaires, and do subsequent planning. The Tea was well attended with over sixty older adults participating which enabled a good sampling of data.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the past year was done in informal table discussions, each being led by a member of the Council. The groups expressed appreciation for the variety of opportunities offered and the quality and variety of the programs; "Something for everyone" was the general consensus. The program suggestions clustered around several areas: meditative workshops and workshops on prayer, discussion groups, day trips, and some form of intergenerational music program.

Planning

The Council divided up the responsibility for planning these events.

A day trip for fun and fellowship was arranged for December 8, 1993, to Los Olivos for lunch together and visiting the art galleries.

A spring day trip would be planned for a picnic and boat trip on Lake Cachuma, led by the resident naturalist.

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[23] Minutes, Senior Ministries Council Meeting, 22 Sept. 1993.

A meditative workshop would be held during Lent 1994, and a workshop on prayer developed for the fall of 1994.

The show of interest in the continuation of the Senior Search discussion group, which had maintained an average attendance of twenty participants, is to be discussed with its older adult leaders. Some form of this discussion group would continue in the spring.

Goals

The Council then reviewed the program goals for the active older adults of the parish and whether the over all program was a means for achieving those goals. The Council felt satisfied with the design.

The Lay Visitor ministry among shut-ins continues with the goals for that program being met by this meeting of the Council. No new goals were seen as necessary at this juncture.

The Council agreed to meet again in April unless a February meeting became necessary because of programmatic problems.[24]

April 6 1994

The Senior Ministries Council met on April 6, 1994.

Reports

The Lay Visitors ministry continued with regular visitation to shut-ins, ten-percent of whom are non-parishioners; good communication with the staffs of the retirement communities; and a sense that this program meets a real need, corroborated by the clergy in their calls on the frail elderly and shut-ins. There were no new suggestions on ways to elaborate on this ministry. The Lay Visitors

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[24] Minutes, Senior Ministries Council, 10 Nov. 1993.

continued to meet every other month for in-service training and for submitting their reports.

The Autobiographical Alumni/ae group continued to meet monthly with the sharing of their writing and suggesting new topics to each other.

There were thirty people on the first day trip to the Santa Ynez valley. The group had lunch together at the Grand Hotel in Los Olivos, and then visited the art galleries and shops. They asked for more trips to be organized, as many of these older adults can no longer drive and depend on others for excursions. They found traveling by cars with prearranged assignments, rather than a bus, gave the occupants time to talk with one another in a more conducive setting.

Planning

The Senior Search Group decided to keep meeting weekly with an emphasis on prayer and the devotional life. This researcher was asked to work with the Group as resource person for program.

The plans for the Lake Cachuma picnic and boat trip were completed for April 14, 1994. The Council noted that this trip filled to capacity very quickly and should be considered again for next year or the year following.

Arrangements for the May 31 Quiet Day, "The Potter's Use for Old Clay," were made at a nearby conference center. This researcher agreed to serve as the retreat leader. The theme was developed to include an emphasis on delving more deeply into this new freedom and the role of Grace within that context, encouraging the participants to journey inward and to reflect on experiences of Grace in their own lives in the past and in the present moment. Additionally each meditation concluded

with an experience of imaging prayer with assignments after each meditation to guide the retreatants personal reflection.

The Council felt that there had been ample opportunity for older adults to gather together and so they decided not to have a Spring Tea, rather to have an evaluation of the past year at the end of the Quiet Day. The next tea will be in the Fall.

The Council discussed the outreach program for older adults and noted that more and more volunteered to help with regular parish outreach programs that do not require too vigorous physical activity. The Council felt it would be a mistake to develop an outreach program solely for older adults. Outreach is an opportunity for intergenerational activity and older adults would be asked to suggest ideas directly to the parish Outreach Council.

Reflection

The Council offered their reflections on the program year. The general sense was that the older adults are intuitively asking for a balanced program between opportunities for study, prayer, volunteer opportunities, and fellowship. There appeared to be an increasingly positive identity of older adults with each other and their position in the parish. Several Council members remarked on the new willingness on the part of many older adults to "try something new" and "to take risks." Over-all, older adults were making their presence known in a positive way in parish life by taking initiative to seek out opportunities to exercise their ministry. For instance, the older adults who offered to provide child care during the Lenten series so young parents could attend the program.

The Council members agreed with the working hypothesis that there was another stage beyond the last one postulated by Erikson. This working hypothesis seemed to be confirmed by the larger number of older adults who were participating in programs, and more importantly, the nature of that participation framed in a spirit of adventure and discovery and with an enthusiasm that is not only surprising, but refreshing.

The Council's main concern was a growing dis-ease in the adequacy of the elements of liberation theologies that have provided a critical perspective on the program. They felt something was missing, and were beginning to question if there was a new dimension of liberation theology emerging within the context of the program. This matter would be monitored by the Council and revisited as the program moves through its third year.

Goals for the Coming Year

The Council reviewed the proposed goals for the coming year and tentatively adopted them pending the outcome of the evaluation and fall tea.

These goals for the frail elderly and shut-ins are:

(1) continue to maintain the program as constituted, alert to the need to add parishioners who have transitioned to this group at any time.

(2) provide the Lay Visitors with a workshop on death and dying led by our parish nurse and a member of Hospice to help our Visitors to minister more effectively when they are asked questions by those on whom they call and by their families.

The program would be maintained and supported by the bi-monthly meetings of the Lay Visitor team with their advisors and clergy liaison.

Lay Visitors will be encouraged to call in the names of those that would like to be on the parish prayer list. A workshop on death and dying would be scheduled sometime during the coming program year.

The goals for the active older adults were established:

(1) building on those programs that older adults have found to be most valuable;

(2) consciously attempting to build a deeper sense of community

(3) offering a variety of programs depending on the evaluations and interest groupings arising out of them.

(4) monitoring the need for a theoretical paradigm shift.

Programming

The tentative programmatic components to carry out these goals are:

(1) arranging for a fall tea with interest assessments and program selection.

(2) collaboration with the parish adult education committee to develop a fall workshop on Benedictine Spirituality;

(3) continuing the Senior Search group on a weekly basis;

(4) planning and arranging for a December day trip to Los Olivos for a second luncheon at the Grand Hotel and then on to Santa Maria to attend a theater performance of Dickens' Christmas Carol and a spring luncheon in Simi Valley and a tour of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library;

(5) continuing an emphasis on outreach to encourage the participation of older adults in appropriate programs;

(6) arranging a spring tea with program evaluation and needs assessment.[25]

The Quiet Day in May was attended by fifty older adults. The evaluations served to reinforce the need to provide more venues for spiritual growth and development as the retreatants expressed real appreciation for this day, and asked for more like them. The evaluations for the program year also were strong in expressing the need for more emphasis on the spiritual life and opportunities to explore it together. The other clear need was for a balanced program with a variety of themes with the underlying understanding that these older adults wanted assistance and support in living out this gift of longevity. This researcher recorded in her journal for this day, that there was a hunger that we were only partially satisfying, and we needed to search out ways to "feed the hungry."[26]

The Third Year: 1994-1995

The fall Tea was held in late September with the main focus on welcoming the new parish music director. The evaluations of the past year's program highlighted the need for a group in which real discussion could take place under the general rubric of spiritual growth. The comment was made more than once that it is not so important what we do, as the fact we have a variety of activities to be together so we can

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[25] Minutes, Senior Ministries Council, 6 April 1994.

[26] M. Michelle Woodhouse, personal journal, 31 May 1994.

grow spiritually.[27]

<u>October 5, 1994</u>

The Senior Ministries Council met on October 5, 1994.

<u>Evaluation</u>

The Council reviewed the evaluations and the goals that had been set prior to the tea. They agreed that the goals were responsive to the needs assessment, and Senior Search would serve as the means to address the request for a discussion group. This researcher, the clergy liaison, was asked to lead this group until it was well established and matured.

<u>Reflection</u>

The Council reiterated its identification of a deficiency in the overall program. They had a vision of a wheel with a central flexible community open to all as the hub. The spokes of the wheel would manifest themselves in specific events, activities, and service. This central community would need two integrated entities: worship and study. The Council felt we were growing closer to identifying a vital bedrock principle, a "reality in search of a theoretical hypothesis," as one consultant member articulated it. The Council had a sense of being on sacred ground, and it was important to go slowly and explore what is emerging out of the chrysalis nestled in it. They were in full agreement that the ministry to older adults seems to have a life and identity of its own. Consequently, they did not want to try to control or second guess

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[27] Participants' evaluations, 28 Sept. 1994.

it, only listen carefully, envisioning themselves as an agent for transformation.

Programming

The Council set the Senior Search group as a top priority, with activities and trips having a secondary emphasis. They realized that this direction might limit the ministry to fewer people involved; however, they agreed that the narrowed focus seemed right, given what they sensed was happening within the context of the older adult ministry.[28]

The fall programming began with the jointly sponsored Benedictine Workshop, led by Abbott Benedict, OSB. It set the stage for the fall program. This researcher's journal records:

> I wonder if Benedictine Spirituality is the missing piece?
> A way to incarnate and actualize the movement we have
> intuitively sensed is emerging . . . perhaps the next step is a
> working theoretical hypothesis that Benedictine
> spirituality with its emphasis on community and the
> balance of prayer, study, and work is the way to frame
> and to understand what is developing in our midst. [29]

This reflection was shared informally with the members of the Council, and they felt it had real merit. Therefore, the general tenor of Senior Search would be framed within a Benedictine perspective in which the central guiding principles are commitment, balance, and the constellation of relationships that constitute the fabric of life. These relationships with God, self, others, and the world (including material possessions) are all possible channels of grace. Grace experienced through everyday life as

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[28] Minutes, Senior Ministries Council, Oct. 5 1994.

[29] Woodhouse, personal journal, 7 Oct. 1994.

a sacrament of the ordinary.

The subject matter for the first four week series with the Senior Search group (who committed themselves to a weekly meeting of one and one-half hours a session), was the nature of grace, how we have experienced it in our lives in the past, and how we experience it in the present. Each participant drew on a piece of newsprint their life's journey from birth to the present and marked the turnings and major events. They shared their life lines, including all the events and experiences which seemed significant to them, helping one another to gain insight into experiences of grace, both in circumstances that were joyful and those that were painful. The evaluations of this series indicated that the life review done in this way was helpful, served to draw the group into deeper relationship with each other, and provided new insights into their relationships.[30]

The second series of six weekly sessions was based on Father Anthony de Mello's videocassette presentations entitled "Finding a Way to God." The subjects of his meditations were silence, peace, joy, life, freedom, and love.[31] The group felt this series had enough material for a number more sessions. They found the meditations drawing them into uncharted areas within themselves and in relationship to God and each other. Their evaluations uniformly note their excitement and enthusiasm for the way Senior Search is offering new meaning to their

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[30] Participants' evaluations of de Mello series, 21 Dec. 1994.

[31] Anthony de Mello, A Way to God for Today (Allen, Tex.: Tabor Publishing, 1992), videocassette.

lives and their desire to share it. One group member wrote: "I am finding that spirituality is like perfume; it permeates everything!"[32]

The day trip on December 7, 1994, to Los Olivos for lunch, and then on to Santa Maria for the live performance of Dickens' <u>Christmas Carol</u>, drew thirty older adults. The evaluations indicated that it was a good excursion, greatly appreciated, and some car-groups had lively discussions of the archetypal characters and how they have been experienced in themselves and in other people.[33]

Senior Search did not meet during January and early February. It began again in late February with a video interview of Madeleine L'Engle discussing her book, <u>A Wrinkle in Time</u>.[34] The purpose in choosing this subject was Ms. L'Engle's reflections on her own life now that she too is an older adult, and serve as a model for looking at our own. The questions she asks as she sifts through her experiences, imaginings, yearnings, and musings are relevant to our own situations. The use of this video was a way of bringing the group back into focus after a period of not meeting together. The group decided to read the book and to discuss it the next session. This researcher's journal notes that this was

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[32] Participant evaluation of de Mello Series, 21 Dec. 1994.

[33] Participants' evaluations of Day Trip, 7 Dec. 1994.

[34] Madeleine L'Engle, <u>A Wrinkle in Time</u> (New York: Dell Publishing, 1962).

the first time the group had taken specific initiative to set its own agenda.[35]

Senior Search began a new series in March on prayer, with a Bible word study on prayer. A visiting speaker spoke on spiritual direction, and the remaining three weeks were spent on forms of prayer, centering prayer, and imaging prayer. The month of April was devoted to forms of meditation in theory and practice.

May and June focused on spiritual formation for eight sessions. The text used was A Spiritual Formation Workbook.[36] This program was based on the five major areas of discipline found in the life of Christ and the five corresponding traditions we identified in the history of the Church. It was an interactive program calling for balance, knowledge and mutual encouragement and accountability to each other in the group. The series has a natural innate rhythm, calling people to live a particular discipline during the week between sessions, and then to share the experience with the group the next week. The intent in using this particular program was to begin to expand the awareness and accountability implicit in Christian community. The evaluations confirm that the group members felt a heightened sense of their own spiritual journey, the traditions that have informed it, and the conscious choices they were making to form a spirituality that intuitively felt right to them. They also expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be shown a way to

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[35] Woodhouse, personal journal, 22 Feb. 1995.

[36] James Bryan Smith, A Spiritual Formation Workbook (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993).

lead their lives with some intentionality.[37]

The broader ministry for older adults in the parish proceeded as planned with a satellite downlink from New York at the home of an older adult. This program, sponsored by the Senior Ministries Council, was opened to all parishioners and their friends. Twenty-two adults gathered for a dialogue between Madeleine L'Engle and Dean James Morton of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, entitled "Mortal Meanness and Divine Plenitude."[38]

The trip to Simi Valley for lunch and a tour of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library on May 31, 1995, was attended by forty older adults. The Holocaust exhibit was of special interest and sparked a number of reminiscences and feelings that they were able to share with one another.

The program year ended with this researcher hosting an old-fashioned garden "Victorian Tea" at her home at which everyone was encouraged to wear a hat. Fifty-five older adults came and hats were provided for those who had "forgotten." The evaluation of the year confirmed that we were finding a good balance for the over-all program. Several of the evaluations noted that older adults were being encouraged to find their own comfort level of involvement and did not feel coerced in any way. Others noted that they felt free to move in and out of

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[37] Participants' evaluations of A Spiritual Formation Workbook series, 25 June 1995.

[38] "Mortal Meanness and Divine Plenitude," with Madeleine L'Engle and Dean James Morton, Episcopal Cathedral Teleconferencing Network, 12 April 1995.

aspects of the program and still feel identified with it and with each other as a community within the larger community of the parish.[39]

<u>July 5, 1995</u>

The Senior Ministries Council met on July 5, 1995.

<u>Reports</u>

The Council received reports on the frail elderly and shut-in program, the results of the physical plant survey, and other aspects of the active older adult program, with particular emphasis on Senior Search.

The workshop for the Lay Visitors on death and dying was held in May as planned, and helped the Visitors with some of the more difficult questions asked of them.

The survey pointed to needs in both the church and the parish hall for wheel chair space in the chancel, grab bars in the restrooms and a ramp leading into the parish hall. These recommendations were forwarded to the Rector and Vestry who acted on them immediately.

<u>Reflection</u>

The Council noted that more and more adults are involved in parish outreach projects and that, as the Outreach Council formulates projects to sponsor, they are taking into consideration projects where older adults can make a significant contribution. Particular mention was made of the fact that many of the inreach (parish centered) volunteer responsibilities are held by older adults who seem to be increasingly willing to step forward. The Council felt there was a general sense that the older adults are much more integrated into the main stream of parish

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[39] Participants' evaluations of the 1994-1995 program year, 28 June 1995.

life than in years past.

The Council found there was a consensus that Senior Search was fulfilling the need for a central, well-articulated and intentional exploration of spirituality in community. The development of this core over the past year appears to be the "missing piece" identified previously. The Council members asked this researcher what her experience had been in developing and leading it. She responded that the key elements came from Benedictine Spirituality and the Senior Search evaluations gave every indication that these elements offered a balanced way to grow spiritually that was particularly compatible with older adults needs.

Theoretically, the principles of Benedictine spirituality, as they are conceived and applied to living in community, offer new substance to the lives of our older adults who have allowed themselves to enter into transforming change through the integrated theory that has under girded this ministry from the outset. The Council, with its experience over the past three years, agreed with this perception. Moving forward, they encouraged this researcher to undertake an experience of studying and living the Benedictine life in community in order to serve as a resource to the Council in the future. The coming year would be devoted to enlarging on this new dimension of older adult ministry in the parish.

Goals for the Coming Year

The Council set goals for the frail elderly and shut-ins which were essentially the same as the previous year. Two additional goals were set:

(1) to make sure the Lay Visitors felt supported and to provide any additional training they feel they might need;

(2) to train an additional Lay Eucharistic Minister to augment this sacramental ministry in the retirement community where a great number of our frail elderly and shut-ins older adult parishioners live.

The goals for the active older adults were to build on the expanded theoretical base with programs that are compatible with it. These would include several trips, one to the new Episcopal Cathedral Center in Los Angeles, a boat trip on Lake Cachuma, and a theater trip. The Council planned a Centering Prayer workshop for the fall and a Lenten Quiet Day in the Spring. They decided not to hold a fall tea, rather in the spirit of the new focus, to concentrate their efforts on other aspects of the program. [40]

The Fourth Year: 1995-1996

The program year began with a Centering Prayer Workshop sponsored by the older adults and open to the entire parish. It was led by Brother Roy Parker, from the Order of the Holy Cross, an Episcopal Benedictine community for men who have a monastery in the foothills of Santa Barbara. This workshop was developed to provide an opportunity to learn about and to practice centering prayer which came from the Eastern Tradition of the Christian Church. This prayer form combined Eastern spiritual exercises with a spirituality for today's world. This subject was chosen because it offered an opportunity to slow down and turn inward and there beyond ideas, words and even images, to discover the deeper reality of our grounding in Jesus Christ. It has enabled

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[40] Minutes, Senior Ministries Council, 5 July 1995.

participants to move into the center of their being and let prayer arise from there. This workshop set the tone for the ministry among older adults for this year. The workshop was attended by fifty people, an intergenerational group of parishioners who gave it enthusiastic endorsement through their evaluations.[41]

Senior Search began meeting every Wednesday morning for one and one-half hours, beginning in September. The first month was devoted to learning more about various aspects of study and prayer that stand at the heart of Benedictine life in community. Time was devoted to Lectio Divina both as an individual and corporate means of Bible study and prayerful meditation on that study. This was followed by consideration of the Benedictine understanding of the sacrament of the ordinary, the ways in which God touches our lives through common everyday life. During October, the group explored their own attitudes toward God and how there is a particular spirituality that informs and is reflected in the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer. The Group asked for some sessions devoted to the Holy Spirit, and consequently, during the month of November, we focused on a consideration of the Person of the Holy Spirit grounded in Scripture. The month of December concentrated on how the Holy Spirit moves in our lives and the life of our community of faith.

The day trip for the fall was a pilgrimage to the new Diocesan Cathedral Center in Los Angeles, to which many of our older adults had made a financial contribution. A former priest in the parish, now on the Diocesan staff, led us on a tour and had lunch prepared for us there.

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[41] Participants' evaluations of the Centering Prayer Workshop, 7 Oct. 1995.

The participants indicated that they came away feeling more connected to the multi-dimensional nature of the Church in this diocese.[42]

One of the Episcopal churches in Santa Barbara was required by law to undertake an extensive earthquake retrofit of its building and tower. One of the ways of financing the retrofit was a benefit performance of the drama Saint Joan in one of our local theaters. The older adults in the parish went as a group. Those who regularly attend Senior Search spoke of their fascination with yet another model of spirituality!

Senior Search began meeting again after the first of the year. The beginning session was a biblical literacy game developed by the national Episcopal Society for Ministry to the Aging. The participants agreed it was a humbling, albeit amusing experience. The curriculum for the remainder of January and the months of February and March was an eight session series entitled Listening for God: Contemporary Literature and the Life of Faith .[43] This series was chosen because it offered models of living the life of the Spirit as it is manifested in the authors lives and in the literature they produce. The series uses both the written word and videotaped interviews with the writers to give a multi-media approach to the issue. This series helped to answer the question

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[42] Participants' evaluations of the Day Trip to The Cathedral Center, 6 Dec. 1995.

[43] Paula J. Carlson and Peter S. Hawkins, Listening for God: Contemporary Literature and the Life of Faith (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1994), videocassette, book, and Leader's Guide.

more than once in our sessions.

The spring "semester" of Senior Search ended with a Holy Week Quiet Morning led by this researcher entitled "Hermit, Patient, and Poet." The meditations and intervals between them presented ways of understanding ourselves as containing each of these dimensions. After each meditation, the retreatants were given a guide to help them reflect on this aspect of themselves. The evaluations gave an indication of how many of the participants had internalized the Senior Search material presented during the year by making correlations and describing their spiritual growth in the intentional community we had formed with Senior Search.[44]

One disappointment for the year was the necessity of canceling, not once, but twice, the scheduled boat trip on Lake Cachuma. The plan was to reschedule it the fall of 1996.

The outreach and inreach ministry of older adults expanded even further this program year. Senior Search instituted an "Angel Food" casserole program in which they each baked a casserole as needed to replenish the supply they established in one of the parish's freezers. The "Angel Food" was hand-delivered to those in crisis when they came to the attention of the clergy, staff, or a Senior Searcher. Many older adults were involved in preparing and serving meals at the Community Kitchen and Transition House. Others packed medical supplies at Direct Relief International's distribution center, while some worked as volunteers to

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[44] Participants' evaluations of the Quiet Morning, 3 April 1996.

provide enrichment programs at primary schools where a large percentage of the students are disadvantaged. Still others served on numerous boards of local and regional philanthropic organizations. There are few older adults in the parish who are not involved in some form of inreach or outreach according to an informal survey taken among active members of the parish by a show of hands during one Sunday's services.

The spring 1996 tea was postponed until the fall at the request of the Rector. The postponement would give the older adults the opportunity to provide a special welcome the new priest and his wife who will be working with our youth.

May 15, 1996

The Council met on May 15, 1996.

Evaluation

The Council decided to utilize the Senior Search group as one important part of the over-all evaluative process. The evaluation sessions focused on the curriculum used in this group, its effectiveness for spiritual development, and how they had experienced this growth in their own lives and in the life of the community. The data gathered in this group confirmed the validity of the Benedictine emphasis as a helpful and supportive context for spiritual growth (a further stage in both the theory and praxis of this evolving paradigm for ministry among older adults.)

The other programmatic components were evaluated by interviews with participants of one or more of the events and activities by this researcher.

Reflection

The consensus was that the ministry had enough variety and depth

and the task now was to work with the fact that not all older

adults had the same degree of involvement and experience within the four

years.

Goals for the Coming Year

The Council adopted a poem as their goal statement with the

evaluation in mind. The poem, entitled "Be Opened," is really a prayer in

which we ask the Lord to open each of our senses, our minds, our hands,

and our lives as a whole in service to God and to others.[45]

Programming

This led the Council to develop a program for the active older adults

for the fifth year, 1996-1997, that repeated some of the earlier offerings

incorporated with new ones. Autobiographical groups, Senior Search

curriculum redesigned to cover some of the same subjects, and a regular

monthly variety of trips and events. The full design of this comprehensive

ministry is contained in the program brochure for the fall of 1996 in

Appendix C.

The ministry among the frail and shut-in elderly would continue

under the same goals and program; however, this entire ministry was to

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[45]David Adam, Tides and Seasons (London: SPCK, 1989), 23.

receive a full evaluation at the Senior Ministries Council meeting in September, 1996 to ensure that it was meeting the needs of these people with special needs.

Senior Search requested to meet over the summer months to discuss current issues. They felt it was important for them to have no break in continuity, even though many of them would be away from time to time. This presented no difficulty to the Council, as it had been understood from the beginning that Senior Search was not a closed group, that all were welcome at any time, and though there was a process behind the curriculum, it had been designed for people to move in and out of it depending on their interest in the subject under discussion. This researcher was willing to meet with them providing the members of the group researched and gathered the information for discussion.[46]

The summer series began with an introduction to what constitutes a value, what are Christian values, and a method for applying the lens of Christian values to current issues. Over the course of the summer, they gathered and discussed physician assisted suicide, abortion, homosexuality, the church burnings, illegal immigration, and prejudice in its various forms. The information on a subject for any given Wednesday was copied and made available on the Sunday morning prior to the meeting. A session was held at the end of August to determine the participants' evaluation of this series on current events.

[46] Minutes, Senior Ministries Council, 12 June 1996.

The program for Older Adults continued to grow and to develop with the participants taking more and more responsibility for its design, implementation, and above all, for the quality of our life together as a Christian community organized on Benedictine principles adapted to a parish setting.

Conclusion

The significance of the four years of this project may be described as a journey inward and a journey outward for the participants and the parish as a whole.

The experience was a journey inward as the participants explored the course of their lives, the meaning they found as the broken places were healed and they learned to celebrate a new freedom and inner wholeness. Their sense of identity came to have positive meaning as they found fulfillment within themselves and an orientation toward the future with the understanding they are pioneers.

The outward journey was characterized by support for each other at prayer, at work, and at play. The flexibility of the project allowed the participants to make choices concerning the degree of their involvement. Another aspect of the outward journey was the changed perception of the older adults by other members of the parish. The more deeply the older adults became involved in all aspects of parish life, the more younger parishioners seemed to seek them out. Most striking of all was the depth of community that the older adults formed, and modeled for the entire parish.

The following chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of this narrative case study and offers some conclusions on the viability of this paradigm to add to the body of knowledge on programs for older adults in individual communities of faith.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this final chapter is to provide an analysis and interpretation of the data from this four year research project and to offer some conclusions that, hopefully, will prove helpful to others engaged in ministry among older adults in a local community of faith.

Method

The final analysis and interpretation at the conclusion of the project were undertaken by a small research team of participants in the project who were involved from the beginning, either on the Senior Ministries Council or actively involved with Senior Search or both. The data utilized was collected from evaluations of events and activities, and the summaries of that data which were included in reports to the Council over the four years. There was also data from interviews, Minutes of the Council, and this researcher's personal journal which incorporated notes, memos, and letters sent to her from time to time from participants in the over-all program. Each year's raw data was analyzed by the team according to the key words that were used uniformly on evaluation forms, in interview questions, and on program surveys. These words were participation, feel, wish, need. The results were compared with the material presented in reports for that year to the Council to insure accuracy. The principal researcher was actively involved in every phase of the analysis and added the data from her personal journal.

The researcher kept the journal material confidential, but also analyzed it according to these key words so her data might be correlated with the other data analyzed by the team.

All the data was utilized and assigned to one of the thematic groupings that emerged from the data itself. These themes were being, belonging, becoming.

This method served to reinforce and validate the praxis that the Council had engaged in over the course of the four years. It served as a check and balance to this praxis and provided a larger perspective on the project. Whereas the Council was reflecting and acting on information up to a given point in the four years, this concluding analysis and interpretation had the benefit of considering all of the data and reviewing the total process over the course of the project, including the two paradigm shifts that occurred as a result of the Council's praxis.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

"Listen carefully . . . ."[1] What had we heard?

The analysis and interpretation of the data must be preceded with a caveat. No one can adequately and rationally analyze the dynamic of the presence, appropriation, and experience of God's grace that permeated the very fabric of this project. Therefore, the presence of mystery always eludes analysis; this mystery is an underlying current that has a purpose of its own, and invites our participation in it. We may suggest that an interpretation of this experience of grace is also an experience of Covenant, of a dynamic relationship initiated by God which is at once an

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[1] [Benedict], Rule of St. Benedict in English, 15.

experience of radical acceptance and radical accountability. A Covenant calling us into new life beyond our present horizon of perceptions of ourselves, God, and others. A Covenant inviting us into a continuing partnership co-creating for change, fulfillment, and actualization.

With that caveat acknowledged, we proceed with analysis. The three principal thematic clusters of *being, belonging, becoming* will be treated separately for purposes of analysis, however in actuality, they are inextricably bound together and serve to enhance each other for the benefit of actualizing the whole person.

The theme of *being* draws together what the data shows as one of three major phenomena that emerged from the case study, a new sense of identity. The data clearly indicates that various elements of the program, particularly the autobiographical groups and Senior Search, have enabled the participants to move from a "naive awareness" to "critical awareness"[2] in working through, or at least coming to terms with and articulating, their unresolved life issues. This has in turn produced what Erik Erikson termed "ego-integrity."[3] This analysis is corroborated by participants' comments that indicate they no longer felt weighed down by the past, were no longer willing to accept being the victims of a society that categorically denigrates and isolates older adults, found that they could make new friends, wanted to stop being settlers and to become pioneers instead, experienced a new curiosity about life, felt they had opinions worth listening to and a wisdom learned through

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[2] Paulo Freire as quoted in Gutierrez, Theology of Liberation, 57.

[3] Erikson, Life Cycle Completed 64.

life experience. Some samples of this new sense of *being* appear in comments like "my life has come together;" "I've stopped believing old people are a mill stone around society's neck, we have a role to play;" "God values me, so who am I not to value me too;" "I'm so busy living in the now, I don't have time to dwell on the past;" "I've finally discovered who I am, and I like me! *I would like to help others have the same experience;*" "God loves me just the way I am, I turned out just right."

More deeply, a set of responses from the autobiographical groups speak of healed memories, grief put to rest, acceptance in haveing done their best, feeling that their life was now one piece and they had further chapters to write; a new interest and energy for the future; a determination to be less isolated and alone. The interpretation of this data is that acceptance of their past life means more energy is available to them. They are not preoccupied with the past and therefore are able to mobilize their resources for living in the present with a future orientation. Finding self acceptance and acceptance from others in the present means for these respondents that they do not have to look back to a time when they felt a strong sense of identity; they are now able to find a concept of self in the present moment, made even stronger by the validation of a community.

The symbol of pioneer versus settler is a powerful one. The understanding that they have status simply by virtue of their age, and are creating a new model by forging a new frontier in human life, has become a norm in the program. This is fueled by the fact that the parish is viewing them in a new light. For example, one of the older adults was asked to come speak to the Youth Group about her life and the meaning

she had found in it through her faith. The parish also is aware of the fact that older adults are taking more responsibility for tasks within the total life of the parish, in the way older adults speak of themselves, and by the community they have formed within the larger community. This researcher has heard more than once that younger parishioners can not wait to become seniors because they seem to know and care for one another in a special way, and they seem to have such fun together!

A summary interpretation is the older adults, through a deliberate program of consciousness-raising, life review, and community building have developed a renewed concept of positive self identity that has moved them over the threshold from ego-integrity into a new stage beyond that postulated by Erikson. This was so evident in the actual case study experience that we found ourselves needing to take steps to make a paradigm shift that opened up a new realm of living by providing new opportunities of various kinds, with particular emphasis on growth and development. This was all made possible as the older adults claimed their freedom to be. This was described by Gutierrez as a freeing _from_ in order to be free _for_ this brand new stage of the journey.[4] This researcher believes this phenomenon is an Exodus experience, without the trials and tribulations of the Wilderness nor its disobedience, rather a direct and personal faithful Covenant with God, in which risk taking is an act of faith not foolishness.

The second major phenomenological thematic cluster was _belonging_. The data indicates there is a link between the social nature of belonging

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[4] Gutierrez, Theology of Liberation, 204.

to a group and the sense of value assigned to the program by older adults. The participants no longer experienced themselves at the margins of the faith community, rather at its center. With their new sense of positive corporate identity, freedom, and time, they became vital participants in the life and ministry of the parish community. They volunteered in a number of aspects of parish life that in the past were the purview of younger parishioners. These new areas included reading Scripture in services of worship, child care so younger parishioners could attend adult education programs, and delivering altar flowers to the sick and homebound.

The data also indicates that the majority of older adults who were most active at the center of the Senior program needed, and subsequently formed, a community within a community they named Senior Search that was open to all. However, this was not a random community loosely organized. The regular participants developed some specific norms modeled on the Benedictine Way. This researcher suggests that one interpretation of the importance of Senior Search in the lives of the participants is their strong sense of a need to belong to something worthwhile in the present, and a community who provides opportunities for in-depth relationships. Representative examples of this theme are: "Everyone really cares for each other in Senior Search;" "It is so wonderful to make new friends, I'm not lonely anymore;" "It makes me feel like I have something to offer when people count on me;" "It is so good to be missed and checked on when I am absent;" "I'm learning to really think about important issues and sharing them with the group draws us together;" "I've been in lots of groups in my life, but this is the first one

where I felt I mattered to the others;" "Christ is present at the center of Senior Search and that makes all the difference!" Further, because of the particular point of time in the project that Senior Search emerges as a community, it appears from the data to be a mark of this new stage of life for older adults. This need to belong, and to belong in a specific way was one of the main factors in precipitating the second paradigm shift in the case study. The other was a result of the third phenomenological thematic cluster.

The specific data generated by the program and the over-all tenor of it as described in the narrative case study demonstrates an acceleration in the felt need for opportunities for spiritual growth that the research team gathered together under the rubric of *becoming*. The data is filled with references to a need to learn, to experience a new depth of spiritual connectedness, to develop a regular devotional life, to engage in Bible study, to build spiritual friendships, and to engage in service to others. The following comments contain this theme: "I feel I'm finally learning to pray and to develop a relationship with God;" "It is so good to feel useful again;" "I feel my life is coming together for the first time and spirituality has a whole new meaning for me." In short, at the conclusion of the third year of the project, it was evident that there was a deep hunger for a spirituality that was in concert with the new sense of being and belonging that emerged in our midst. The project seemed to be moving into a new phase that lay beyond the confines of the initiating theory. The participants were claiming their freedom, so the question became: How might they utilize their freedom in a life-enhancing way for themselves and others?

We found that the data coalesced around particular themes. Equally true is the evidence that the more deeply involved an individual was the more intensely they experienced these thematic clusters. The design of the project allowed for a fluidity of involvement. The older adults in the parish were identified and kept informed of the program and were absolutely free to choose whether they wished to participate in any or all of the parts of it. The over-all program also was purposely designed to draw the older adults into a greater depth of community and to make certain that there was no sense, what-so-ever, of exclusivity on any level. The data bears out that the older adults understood the principle of inclusivity, and further, that the design was experienced as open and hospitable without any hint of coercion. This was true also for those who came to the program during the second, third, and even the four year. Perhaps most dramatically, was the reported experience of our "snow birds," those who are with us for only a portion of the year. They came right back into the program to the degree they had been before without any hesitation. Some of their notes and letters indicate how much they miss the program when they are away, particularly the new relationships they have established with others in it, and the rhythm and balance of our life together. Consistently, they also evidenced a relationship between their depth of involvement in the program and intensity of experience of *being, belonging,* and *becoming.*

This relationship between involvement and intensity seems to be directly related to the concepts of conscientization and liberation discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. In other words, the more an individual is involved, the more their consciousness is raised, and thereby, the more

apt some are to claim their freedom and be liberated from stereotypes that are self imposed or imposed by others. The opposite is also true, that some, having been introduced to consciousness raising and liberation, opt to maintain their status quo because they are afraid of upsetting the homeostasis worked out over many years within their primary relationships. This was found to be particularly true among women married for a long time and currently living with their spouse. These women would attend Senior Search for a period, and then drop out with the explanation that they felt they should spend the time with their husbands. These same women would be accompanied by their husbands to events and on trips. We found that, according to our data, the majority of older men tended to remain on the less intimate and intensive levels in the program, and their wives tended to remain on the same level with them, with several exceptions. In all but one of the exceptions, the wives were considerably younger and more physically healthy and mentally alert; therefore they were able to participate in the programs in a way there husbands were unable and these may have been factors in these exceptions.

Another dimension evident in the data is the holistic nature of the expressed needs. The participants were asking for opportunities for prayer, study, and work, as well as seeking assistance to find a balance in all the dimensions of their lives. Older adults express experiences of imbalance in their lives as a direct result of living longer. As their life circumstances change with various kinds of personal losses and the onset of physical limitations, they seem to need support, education, and encouragement to find a new equilibrium that optimizes their resources

and enables them to live into their freedom to be, to belong, and to become.

The intensification of the expression of this need prompted the Council to work with the Adult Education Committee of the parish to sponsor a workshop with Abbott Benedict Reid, a Benedictine monk. This workshop was attended by many of our older adults, and their enthusiastic evaluations and this researcher's personal reflections, seemed to focus on a way that might serve to meet the need. This precipitated the second major paradigm shift.

Senior Search became the entity that offered this opportunity for an experience of intentional community based on the Benedictine Way. It was understood from the outset that we were forming a "school for the Lord's service,"[5] an egalitarian community with a commitment to being on journey, pilgrimage, in Christ, with a priest as a facilitating agent in the person of this researcher. The data shows this movement to a Benedictine model served as a catalyst for meeting the need of those seeking to organize their lives and being in a new and balanced manner within the context of a faith community. For example, a number of the participants made a commitment to the researcher and to each other to put Senior Search as a top priority in their lives by attending regularly, praying for each other, encouraging others to participate, and involve themselves more deeply in the life of the parish and in outreach to the community.

The evidence suggests that the Benedictine Way not only can be

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[5] [Benedict], Rule of St. Benedict in English, 12.

adapted to parish life, but also lends itself quite naturally to it. By its

very nature, Benedictine spirituality is not some additional religious

system; rather it is simply a way of learning and living the Gospel in

community, celebrating, day by day, the sacrament of the ordinary.

Dennis Odekirk, Rector of the parish, has written,

> Benedictines see living the Gospel from three basic
> perspectives. First, it is a question of 'obedience'--
> remaining faithful to our vision of and commitment to
> Christ. Secondly, it is a matter of 'stability'. My favorite
> contemporary expression of this is 'Bloom where you are
> planted.' Strong words to a transient society. And finally,
> it involves 'conversatio'-- a difficult term which suggests
> living, reflecting, learning, growing, and making our
> response to the Gospel concrete in the daily actions of
> life.[6]

These three basic perspectives are the focus for our ongoing life.

The participants are continually, both individually and corporately,

employing these perspectives as standards for examining their spiritual

growth. Evidences of "bloom where you are planted" may be observed in

some of the by-products of this paradigm shift to a Benedictine model is a

renewed sense of purpose and sense of worth that runs through the

participants in this intentional community, Senior Search. There is an

openness, an excitement, a willingness to try new things, a warm and

genuine hospitality that welcomes newcomers to its midst. The

participants are committed to meeting one morning a week for sharing

their individual faith journeys and for disciplined study. They are

accountable to the group as a whole. Additionally, the members of the

group work and play together in and out of the parish.

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[6] Odekirk, memorandum to the Vestry, 3.

The Benedictine Way, as adapted for older adults use, seems to be a potent method for meeting the needs of the community. This is reinforced by the most recent data that the participants feel change within themselves that they experience as positive, life-giving in the present, and future oriented. This is further evidenced in the new ways they are discovering for stewardship of themselves, the gifts they bring to the community, their relationships to each other, and in the hospitality they embody in their ministry in the parish and in the larger community.

In summary of the analysis and interpretation of data, the evidence points to the appropriateness of the symbols of Creation, the Fall, and Covenant.

The symbol of Creation and its accompanying symbol of the Imago Dei, speak to the experience of movement toward fulfillment, being and becoming in Christ, self in relationship with God, nature, and others. A social destiny of meaning and purpose. This was the experience of the participants in the project, particularly the ones who were regularly a part of Senior Search.

The symbol of the Fall is a symbol of the social nature of sin, also an element of the experience of the participants as they fell victim to their own and others' abuse of freedom in the belief and practice of age discrimination. The participants experienced estrangement and alienation from themselves and others until they undertook the hard work of moving toward wholeness by integrating their life experience comes under this symbol.

The symbol of Covenant is an apt one for the participants' resolution to live in a continuing relationship with God and each other in their new found freedom to be, to belong, and to become. Here again the Benedictine Way's three perspectives of obedience, stability and conversatio serve as the means to live the Covenant in an intentional manner on the journey to the promised land.

Conclusions

The research team and the researcher drew the following conclusions from the reflections of the Senior Ministries Council over the four years of the project and from their own work at the end of the four year project.

Method

Concerning the method employed in the project, our experience would seem to indicate that:

1. The initiating theory gave a foundation, direction, and impetus for the project. The integration of psychological insights with principles from liberation theologies provided a fresh perspective for the praxis component of the paradigm.

2. The praxis component really drove the major segment of the project, particularly when the limitations of the initiating theory became evident. What appeared was a built in check and balance emanating out of the praxis that served as a corrective.

3. The Senior Ministries Council's deliberations and reflections served as the method for praxis. The regular needs' assessment and the evaluative process stood at the heart of the paradigm and served the project well in this particular faith community.

4. The application of the Benedictine Way was an appropriate step within this Episcopal parish. It served as a natural progression into a form of freedom in community compatible with Anglican Tradition and the theology that stands behind The Book of Common Prayer.[7]

5. The project seems to be transferable to other communities of faith because the underlying theoretical foundation is based on broad principles formulated out of a variety of settings. The program components may be tailored to a particular setting and still accomplish the same purpose. The one exception might be the use of guided autobiography as an important first step in the initiation of any program for older adults in a community of faith.

Content

Concerning the content of the project, the following conclusions seem to be of some importance:

1. The particular vehicles for program were chosen because of, one, their compatibility with the prevailing ethos of this specific parish with its emphasis on education, the arts, and need to form community; and two, the programs were suggested or endorsed by the participants themselves. The content then, is not all necessarily transferable to another setting.

2. The project's varied and porous levels of involvement, where people were encouraged to participate at deeper levels, but not coerced, allowed for the very freedom we were attempting to actualize in the lives

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[7] The Book of Common Prayer (New York: Church Hymnal Corporation, 1982).

of the participants. This gave the project an integrity which was consonant with both the initiating theory and the praxis of the paradigm.

3. The autobiographical workshop and subsequent ongoing groups were key to the project's success and are transferable to other settings.

4. The project has now taken on a life of its own, following the same process as described with less leadership required from the clergy and Council and more from many of the participants at all levels. It remains to be seen what new paradigm shifts will arise out of the ongoing praxis.

5. All in all, there is still no substitute for "Listen carefully . . . ."[8] and attending to what we hear arising out of our own context. This project has given new meaning, both in depth and breadth, to the resources that older adults may appropriate within themselves and their faith communities if only they will exercise their freedom to be, to belong, and to become for their great good and God's greater glory.

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[8] [Benedict], <u>Rule of St. Benedict in English</u>, 15.

Appendix A

Needs Assessment Tools

SENIORS OF ALL SAINTS BY-THE-SEA

Tea for Seniors: September 15, 1992

MENU

Appetizer: Senior Tea

Special Entree: Guided Autobiography Workshop: October 3rd

A la Carte:

- Autobiographical Group

- Quiet Day: "Spirituality for Seniors"

- Tea and Program: SEE-INTERNATIONAL

- Discussion Groups: Topics?

- Film Group: Topics?

- Day Trips to Special Places: such as?

- "Lunch Bunch" with program: Topics?

Just Desserts:

- Intergenerational Programs of Interest to You

Beverages:

- Suggestions and Comments

TO: Senior Ministries Council
FROM: Michelle Woodhouse
SUBJECT: Program Suggestions from the Senior Tea
DATE: October 14, 1992

1. Autobiographical group: Please see attachments

2. Quiet Day: "Spirituality for Seniors" (Good interest)
     Mt. Calvary or Casa Maria

3. Tea AND TALK: SEE INTERNATIONAL (Good interest)
     Baillie Brown interested in organizing it

4. Workshops: (Some interest in following topics)
     Prayer and approaches to prayer - intercession
     Psalms (and learning to sing them)
     Preparations for the next disaster
     What social changes are biblically acceptable
     How can we interact with other denominations
     History of All Saints.. Humorous incidents

5. Discussion Groups:(some interest in the following topics
     Should the Social Gospel prevail
     Member of Search Committee talk/report to Seniors
     What we learn from life experiences
     How to live life victoriously
     Major turning points in our walks with the Lord
        experiences or verses from Scripture which
        brought wisdom to live victoriously in some
        area of life

6. Film Group: (Good response) Suggested films:
        old black and whites
        The Life of Jesus
        Babette's Feast (x2)
        Sister Act (x2)
        Cocoon
        Stranger's in Good Company
     Possible private showing at Victoria St. Theater ?

7. Day Trips (Great interest)
        Church in Los Olivos (and little art shops there)
        General excurisons (x2)
        Mosaics at the Greek Orthodox Church
        Trips to Los Angeles
        Judson Glass Studio (x2)
        Cathedral of St. James - Camarillo
        Casa Maria
        Mount Calvary
        Art, religious trips
        SMC - St. Sophia
        Vedanta Temple

8. "Lunch Bunch" (Great Interest)
        a. small groups
        b. Brown bag
        c. Purely social (x3)
        d. People's homes

9. Other Suggestions
        a. Seniors' Art Show (Ginger Puddicombe)
        b. Music Concert (one table group and general
        interest)

SURVEY OF INTEREST
SMALL GROUPS FOR SENIORS

Would you bo intorostod in participating in a-small group of your poors gotting togothor for loarning and onjoymont? Horo aro somo suggestions for ways our now sonior group might wish to spend time togethcr. Wc are cager to know what your needs and interests are for this church group.

Please take a few momonts to indicato your interest level and add your suggestions or comments to tho suggestions bolow.

NAME: __31 Responders__   Date PHONE: __Nov. 5, 1991__

Scoring: 2 points: high Interest; 1 Point: Interest; O point: low Interest

1. Discuss how we might live more fully as we *grow* older. Interest Score: 41

   High Interest   Interest   Low Interest

2. Explore how we can deal with the practicalities of fulfilling our needs and pondering the questions of independence and dependence. Interest Score:33

   High Interest   Interest   Low Interest

3. Walk and talk together while enjoying a variety of activities. eg. Walking in neighborhoods, seeing films, sharing breakfast or lunch. Interest Score:40

   High Interest   Interest   Low Interest

4. Take day trips to special places. Interest Score:32

   High Interest   Interest   Low Interest

5. Choose books to read together about our time of life. Interest Score:27

   High Interest   Interest   Low Interest

6. Discuss relationships and communication with our middle-aged children, grandchildren and othors. Interest Score:30

   High Interest   Interost   Low Interest
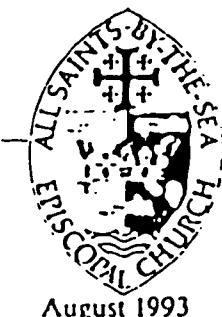
All Saints-By-The-Sea Episcopal Church

August 1993

Dear Friends;

This letter comes to you to highlight the Fall activities planned especially for the Seniors of All Saints.

Monday, August 30, 1993: Quiet Day 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Parish Hall. The theme is "The Primacy of the Heart/Experiencing the Riches of God's Grace." Emma Lou Benignus will lead us in our exploration of this theme from the perspective of older adults. Please call the Parish Office (969-4771) to register and to request transportation if needed. The deadline is August 25th.

Sunday, September 12, 1993: The Seniors of All Saints invite all parishioners to a Grandparents Day celebration! There will be a pot-luck supper in the Parish Hall at 5:00 p.m. followed by the showing of the film; *Born Free*. Paul Radin, the producer of the film, will introduce it by taking us "behind the scenes." Please call the Parish Office to sign-up (969-4771) or see the Welcome Table at Church. This event is for everyone and we need Seniors in abundance!

Monday, September 27, 1993 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall: We will begin a six week series entitled Senior Search. This series will be focused on the discussion of the possibilities for Christian solutions for our changing social problems. Please see August Soundings for a complete description of the program. Please call the Parish Office (969-4771) or sign-up at the Welcome Table.

Friday, October 29 1993 3:00 p.m.: There will be a Garden Tea at the church sponsored by the Senior Ministries Council. This will be an opportunity to review our past year and to receive suggestions for programming for the coming year.

There is some interest in the formation of a new autobiographical group to meet for nine consecutive weeks. We need three to five more people! If you would like the opportunity to receive support in writing down your life story and to share life experiences with others, and have some fun doing it, call Michelle Woodhouse (969-4771) for more information.

This comes with the hope that some or all of these programs will be of interest to you and you will join us. We are always open to new program ideas so let me know by telephone or appointment.

With all best wishes to each and everyone of you -

In Christ,

The Rev. M. Michelle Woodhouse
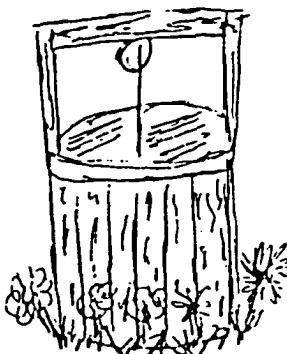
SENIORS OF ALL SAINTS BY-THE-SEA

The "WISHING WELL": October 29, 1993

WISHES FULFILLED:

The Senior Ministries Council provided the following programs from YOUR wish list at our Fall Tea last year:

- Autobiographical Workshop, Groups, and a continuing Alum Group
- Monthly afternoon Film Group
- Spring Tea and Art Show
- Quiet Day with Emma Lou Benignus
- Pot Luck Supper and "Born Free" film on GrandParents' Day
- Senior Search: "Christian Responses to Current Social Issues" (Brown-bag" lunch and discussion for 6 weeks)

WISHES BEING FULFILLED:

- Day Trip: Wednesday, December 8th to Los Olivos with Lunch at The Grand Hotel (cost $13.) PLEASE SIGN UP on the sheet at your table today if you would like to learn more about this trip.
- New Autobiographical Group: 9 weeks on a day and time to be decided by the Group (we need three more people!) PLEASE SIGN UP on the sheet at your table.
- Spring Day Trip: Cachuma Lake boat trip to explore the flora and fauna of this little Eden

YOUR WISHES FOR THE FUTURE:

What programs would you like to see repeated?

What NEW programs would be of interest to you?
(The Senior Ministries Council needs your "Wish List")

Here are a few suggestions to start your discussion:

- A Lenten Quiet Day (possibly at Mount Calvary Monastery)

- Day Trips: to where?

- "Brown Bag" lunch/discussion series: Topics?

- Workshop on Prayer

- Music Program: the stories behind some of our hymns and
                         a "sing-along" too!

- Other Suggestions:

  Complete this sentence: "I wish the Seniors of All

  Saints could have................................."

Tabulation of Responses

<u>YOUR WISHES FOR THE FUTURE</u>

(48 people responded to the table discussions)

What programs would you like to see repeated?

-Spring Tea and Art Show: 48 of 48

What NEW programs would be of interest to you?

(The Senior Ministries Council needs your "Wish List")

-**A Lenten Quiet Day:** 40 of 48

-**Day Trips: to where?** 23 of 48

- Los Angeles Theatre, Gradens of Montecito, Santa Maria Theatre,

Alice Keck Park, Disneyland, Judson Studios, Lake Cachuma,

Huntington Library and Gardens, Los Olivos Art Galleries

-**"Brown Bag" lunch/discussion series: Topics?** 12 of 48

- Share your Skills Event, continuing Senior Search, Israel

-**Workshop on Prayer:** 19 of 48

-**Music Program: the stories behind some of our hymns and a sing-along too!** 30 of 48

-**Other Suggestions:** 46 of 48

(Complete this sentence: "I wish the Seniors of All Saints could have.................")

- Harvest Sale, Pot luck suppers, transportation, (possibly a

transportation coordinator for seniors), golf, matinee at local theater,

workshops on various subjects; current event discussions; presentations

on aging, spirituality, prayer, medical ethics.

Senior Ministries
All Saints By-the-Sea

EVALUATION FORM

ACTIVITY:_____

DATE:_____

I participated in this activity because.....................................

....

I feel this program helped me to...

....

I wish that this program...

....

I need...from the Senior
Ministries program.

Suggestions and Comments:

Optional:

YOUR NAME:_____

Appendix B

Senior Ministries Council Structure Chart

Parish Congregation

Rector and Vestry

Associate Priest

Senior Ministries Council

Lay Visitors Sacramental Communication Senior Search Fellowship Education
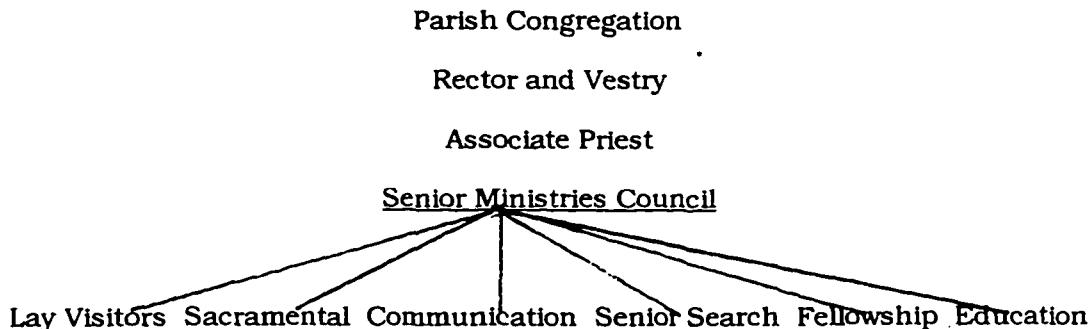
Lay Visitors: Team of 9 with professional consultants who call on the frail elderly

Sacramental: 2 Lay Eucharistic Ministers and 3 Clergy who take Holy Communion to
to the frail elderly, the hospitals, and the residential care medical centers

Communication: Subcommittee with the responsibility for publicizing Senior activities
and
programs

Senior Search: Ongoing weekly group committed to work, study and prayer

Fellowship: Subcommittee with the responsibility for developing activities and programs
to develop and sustain relationships among Seniors and to plan for
intergenerational events with other parish committees

Education: Subcommittee with the responsibility for planning and implementing
educational programs and events

Appendix C

1996 Fall Program Brochure

open our hands...

Inreach Opportunities
(partial list)

- **"Angel Food"**: Periodically prepare a casserole to replenish our frozen food cupboard for those who are in need due to *illness or accident*, or who are in mourning.
- **Holy Huddle**: Men's Group for worship, fellowship, and service.
- **Prayer Circle**: Receive the Parish Prayer list each week by mail to your *home and uphold those who are seeking our prayers for special needs.*
- **Flower Delivery**: Be one of a scheduled team who faithfully delivers the altar flowers to the ill, shut-ins, and very senior birthday celebrants after services on Sunday.
- **Transportation**: Occasionally drive another Senior to Services of Worship and to Parish activities.

open our hearts...

Outreach Opportunities
(partial list)

- **Friendship Center**: Volunteer time and talent to help with this all-important ministry.
- **Community Kitchen**: Join fellow parishioners to help prepare lunch for the homeless.
- **Transition House**: Help us to help others get a new start in life on All Saints' scheduled day.
- **Tell us** where you volunteer, and whether more volunteers are needed. *Call Michelle Woodhouse, 969-4771.*

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Please sign me up for:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please tell me more about:

_____

_____

_____

_____

...and living shall declare your Presence.

All Saints-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church

Senior Program

Fall 1996

Offered to the Seniors of All Saints and their friends by All Saints Senior Ministries.

Outreach   *Prayer & Study*

Events   *Trips*
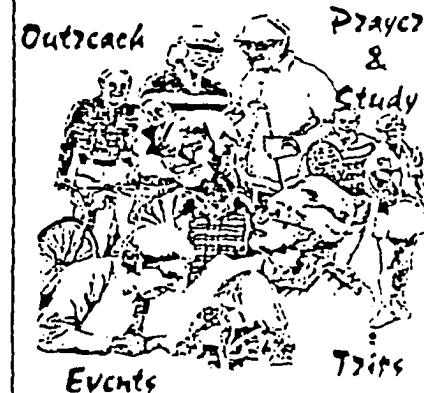
Be Opened

Lord open our lips,
And our mouth shall declare your praise.

Lord, open our eyes,
And our seeing shall behold your glory.

Lord, open our hearts,
And our feeling shall know your love

Lord, open our minds,
And our thinking shall discover your wonders.

Lord, open our hands
And our giving shall show your generosity.

Lord, open our lives,
And our living shall declare your Presence.

—David Adam

83 Eucalyptus Lane, Santa Barbara, CA 93108
(805)-969-4771

Lord, open our minds...

Senior Search
Wednesdays, 9:00–10:30 a.m.
(except trip Wednesdays: Sept. 25, Oct 23, Nov. 13)
Humphrey House Living Room

A small group experience designed to study and discuss a wide range of areas of interest and concern form a Christian perspective.

September: "On Journey"

Three Wednesdays with stories

4 "The Wolf's Eyelashes"
11 "The Seagull and the Raven"
18 "The First Rose"

October: "Aspects of Affirmative Aging"

Four Wednesdays
2 Challenge to Ministry
9 The Gift of Wisdom
16 Leisure and Learning
30 Death Preparation as Life Enhancement

November: "Spirituality in Hymnody"

Three Wednesdays with Nelson Huber
6 Hymns of the Wesley Brothers
20 New Songs for Lent
27 Hymnody for a New Age

December: "The Great 'O's"

Three Wednesdays
Advent antiphons, sung with the Magnificat prior to Chistmas Eve, convey through their "Great 'O's" the longing for the coming of the Lord. These longings are answered in Mary's Magnificat, which proclaims God's promises fulfilled in material and spiritual terms.

4 Introduction, O Wisdom, O Adonai (Lord)
11 O Root of Jesse, O Key of David, O Day-Spring
18 O King of Nations, O Emmanuel

open our eyes...

Senior Trips
(Wednesdays whenever possible)

September 25

Tour and Presentation of the Orthodox Church in Goleta by Father Zosos
From: 10:30 a.m. To: 2:00 p.m.
Luncheon: (restaurant to be announced)

October 23

Lake Cachuma Boat Trip and Migratory Bird Watch, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 noon
Luncheon–Cold Springs Tavern, 12:30 p.m.
Return to Church by 3:00 p.m.

November 13

Huntington Library Tour and Luncheon
Leave: 9:00 a.m. Return: 6:00 p.m.

December 8

12:00 noon Luncheon
2:00 p.m. Ensemble Theatre: After Magritte & The Real Inspector Hound .
Return by 5:00 p.m.

open our lips...

Senior Autobiographical Workshop
(and Brown Bag Group)
8 Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
Sept. 4 ,11, 18, Oct. 2, 9, 16, 30, Nov. 6
Humphrey House Living Room

A small group of 4 to 6 who commit themselves to meet with one another for 10 weeks. 2 hours a week. This group will:

- Write two or three pages on an assigned autobiographical theme each week.
- Share their writing with one another in the confidence that "what is read in the group stays in the group."
- Offer insight and encouragement to one another.
- Have fun!

open our lives...

Senior Events
(Saturday whenever possible)

September 21, 3:00 p.m

"Our Harvest" Tea–Michelle's Home

October 19, 9:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.

"The Changing Landscape in Medicine: Ethical Concerns in Managed Care–What You Need to Know"–Robert Wright, M.D.

November 16, 9:00 a.m.–12 noon

Pro-active Workshop for Seniors: "Attention to Last Things–Planning Your Memorial Service"–Rev. Michelle Woodhouse & Nelson Huber

December 14, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Advent Quiet Morning: "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner–Come Thou Unexpected Jesus"–The Rev. Dennis Odekirk, leader

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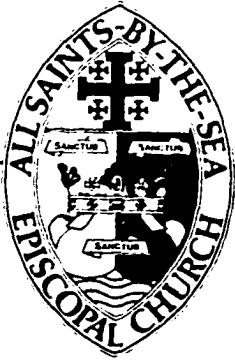
All Saints-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church

83 Eucalyptus Lane, Santa Barbara, CA 93108 • (805) 969-4771 • Fax (805) 565-1281

I, Dennis R. Odekirk, Rector of All Saints-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, Santa Barbara, California, hereby give M. Michelle Woodhouse, permission to use excerpts from the Parish Profile, Soundings, and materials that she has used in the course of her ministry with older adults in this parish. This permission includes, but is not limited to, needs assessments, Minutes of Senior Ministries Council meetings, and evaluation results. This permission is granted with the understanding that she will honor the confidentiality of individuals in the use of any or all of the above materials. This permission extends to the use of these written materials for the purpose of her project for the faculty of the School of Theology at Claremont, California, and any subsequent use of her project for presentation purposes and/or publication.

Signed _____   Date _11/18/96_
The Rev. Dennis R. Odekirk, Rector